Washington State Criminal Justice Training Commission
Telecommunicator Program Office

TELECOMMUNICATOR
I

BASIC CALL TAKER

Table of Contents

**UNIT 1 – OVERVIEW OF THE E9-1-1 SYSTEM,
AND EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES 5**
- E9-1-1 System Overview & Features of the E911 System 8
- GPS & VoIP 9
- Telematics 10
- AMBER Alert 13

UNIT 2 – ROLE OF THE CALL TAKER 25
- Intro to Stress Management 32
- Liability Awareness 37
- Overview of the Incident Command System 43
- Team/Group Dynamics 51
- Active Listening………………………………………………………………………. 51
- Customer Service 63
- Justice Based Policing – An Overview 69

UNIT 3 – CALL PROCESSING 71
- Obtaining the Information (6 Ws, physical/veh descriptors) 74
- Terminating the Call 70
- Responder Safety 81
- Techniques for Different Types of Callers 81
- Callers in Crisis ……………………………………………………………………………… 82
- Mentally Ill Callers 84
- Suicidal Callers 87
  - Suicide by Cop 87
  - General Risk Assessment (PLAIDPALS) 90
- Hysterical Callers/Persistent Repetition 93
- Deaf/TTY, Hard of Hearing or Speech Impaired Callers 99

UNIT 4 – EMERGENCY MEDICAL DISPATCH OVERVIEW 114

UNIT 5 - CALL INTERVIEWING 124
- All Caller, Initial Screening, Severity 125
- Domestic Violence Calls 129
- Missing, Abducted, Exploited Children 135
- Taking Fire Calls 140

UNIT 6 – LAW ENFORCEMENT GLOSSARY 152

Unit 1

Overview of the E9-1-1 System & Emerging Technologies

UNIT TITLE: **UNIT 1 – OVERVIEW OF THE E9-1-1 SYSTEM, AND EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES**

LEARNING OBJECTIVES FOR THIS UNIT:

At the end of this unit of study when given a real or hypothetical scenario or question, the student will be able to:

- List the essential features of an Enhanced 9-1-1 System
- Define the acronym “GPS”
- Define the acronym “VoIP”
- List the two technologies necessary to have telematics services
- List the 6 pieces of information that minimally should be obtained on a Telematics call for service as described in the curriculum
- Identify the lead agency in Washington State for the Washington Statewide AMBER Alert Plan
- List the 5 elements that must be satisfied for an incident to qualify for an AMBER Alert

9-1-1 System Overview

9-1-1 is intended as a nationwide emergency telephone number providing callers access to police, fire, and medical assistance. 9-1-1 is provided as a public service with the intent of helping to preserve life and property.

The history of 9-1-1 began when in 1957; the National Association of Fire Chiefs recommended a single number be identified for reporting fires.

In 1967, The President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice recommended that a "single number should be established" nationwide for reporting emergencies. After determining that establishing different numbers for different types of emergencies was not an effective way of dealing with the issue, the federal government asked the FCC for a solution.

In November 1967, the FCC and AT&T met to find a solution that could be quickly implemented. In 1968, AT&T established the three-digit code 9-1-1, throughout the U.S.

In February 1968, the first 9-1-1 call was made in Haleyville, Alabama.

In the early 1970's, sophisticated features for 9-1-1 were developed by AT&T and tested in a pilot program in Alameda County. This feature was "selective call routing" which is one of the features of Enhanced 9-1-1 today.

Today, nearly some type of 9-1-1 service covers 93% of the population of the U. S. Of those covered by 9-1-1, 95% have enhanced 9-1-1.

THE ENHANCED 9-1-1 (E9-1-1) SYSTEM IN WASHINGTON STATE

In 1991, Engrossed Substitute House Bill 1938 was passed by the legislature and subsequently ratified by voters in November 1992, under Referendum 42. The purpose of the legislation and referendum was to implement Enhanced 9-1-1 systems in every county in the state by 1999. The legislation directed the Department of Community Development to coordinate and facilitate implementation and operation of a statewide Enhanced 9-1-1 (E9-1-1) emergency communications network.

The E9-1-1 program was established within the Emergency Management Division of Community Development that was subsequently transferred to the Military Department in 1997. The mandate included the requirement to establish a [State] E9-1-1 office, hire a coordinator and other necessary staff, establish a State E9-1-1 Advisory Committee, adopt E9-1-1 system standards, and manage a grant program to local governments. The referendum included both local option and state telephone excise taxes to support the program.

The E9-1-1 Advisory Committee was established according to the legislation. The committee's purpose is to advise the state in the implementation and operation of the E9-1-1 Program [Office]. Multiple stakeholders represent The Committee including: The Association of Public Safety Communications Officials International (APCO), The Nine-One-One Emergency Number Association (NENA), counties, cities, law enforcement, fire and emergency medical service providers, the Utilities and Transportation Commission, and large and small telephone exchange and wireless service providers.

Funding collections began in January 1992, through the state 9-1-1 telephone excise tax. Authorization to use these funds, via appropriation, was included in the 1992 Supplemental Budget and subsequent biennial budgets.

Citizens in the State of Washington passed legislation that would fund the installation of Enhanced 9-1-1 (E9-1-1) throughout the state by the end of 1998. Most counties were able to comply with this mandate making E9-1-1 available to citizens in all parts of the state.

The E9-1-1 system in the State of Washington has several parts. Locally, each resident has a countywide system, which is responsible for providing E9-1-1 services to their residents. Residents of the county pay a monthly tax on their telephone bill based on the number of access lines to their homes and businesses, the proceeds of which go into funds for establishing, maintaining, and upgrading the E9-1-1 system. Some of these monies go to the State of Washington E9-1-1 Office that disburses funds throughout the state for a variety of programs involved with E9-1-1. In addition, wireless and Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) monies are collected from cellular phone subscribers. The money is divided between the subscriber's county E9-1-1 coordinator's office and the state E9-1-1 office.

IDENTIFY BENEFITS E9-1-1 PROVIDES TO THE CITIZENS OF WASHINGTON

ONLY ONE NUMBER WHICH IS EASY TO REMEMBER - Only one number to remember for police, fire, and medical emergencies is easier than having to remember or have ready access to several seven-digit numbers. This also allows for people who are unfamiliar with the area to dial the same number they would anywhere else. Having one number means the caller does not have to memorize new numbers for emergency public safety service.

FREE ACCESS FROM COIN AND CELLULAR TELEPHONES - Allows the caller to dial 9-1-1 without inserting money into the telephone or paying airtime charges with a cellular telephone company.

TDD/TTY ACCESS TO PUBLIC SAFETY SERVICES - Allows hearing and speech impaired callers using these devices to access public safety agencies quickly without having to dial a seven digit number. (TDD: telecommunications device for the deaf. TTY: Teletypewriter).

IMPROVED ADDRESSING REQUIREMENTS - Addresses play a very important role in 9-1-1, especially with Enhanced 9-1-1. Addressing systems vary by jurisdiction. An E-9-1-1 system requires acceptable addressing standards be met in order to ensure the accuracy of the information in the database.

LOCATION, NUMBER AND SUBSCRIBER INFORMATION – Enhanced 9-1-1 provides an agency with the telephone number from which the call was made and the address of the subscriber. This benefit allows persons who are unable to complete a call for assistance after 9-1-1 was dialed, to have a public safety agency respond to the location shown in the address field of the database.

FUNDING - The tax placed on access lines and cellular and VoIP telephones creates funding for local jurisdictions as well as the State of Washington. The State redistributes money back to local or county jurisdictions to help defray the cost of upgrading outmoded systems to a current Enhanced 9-1-1 system. This allows callers living or traveling into any area of the state to use 9-1-1 for emergencies. Funding also pays for training programs and public education.

STANDARDIZED TRAINING - Allows for telecommunicator training to be conducted on topics such as call taking, dispatching and emergency medical programs, supervisory and other courses.

TYPES OF ANSWERING POINTS:

PSAP (pronounced p-sap) PUBLIC SAFETY ANSWERING POINT: A communications facility that acts as an answering location for emergency calls from within a given service area.

There are both Primary and Secondary PSAP's. Primary PSAP's receive 9-1-1 calls directly from the public, while secondary PSAP's receive the calls from a transfer or relay basis from the original answering point. Often the Primary PSAP is the law enforcement communications center responsible for the jurisdiction from where the call was placed.

Secondary PSAPs do not receive 9-1-1 calls directly, but may receive them as transfers from a Primary PSAP. An example is when a police or sheriff Primary PSAP transfers a call to a Secondary PSAP fire department

PSAPs can act as both Primary and Secondary PSAP. A combined dispatch center that dispatches fire in an area covered by another PSAP can be considered a Secondary PSAP for fire, but a Primary PSAP for their own law enforcement/fire agencies.

METHODS OF HANDLING CALLS:

DIRECT DISPATCH - Emergency calls that come into a 9-1-1 center that is also responsible for dispatching responders to the incident. The person answering the call may also be the person dispatching the call.

CALLER TRANSFER - Emergency calls that come into a 9-1-1 center that does not have responsibility for dispatching the field units. The 9-1-1 Center determines the jurisdiction for the call and transfers the caller to the dispatching agency. In some cases, these calls are transferred on a dedicated telephone circuit rather than relying on the public switch network of telephone lines. During call transfer, the caller is transferred, not necessarily the details of the incident.

CALL RELAY - The call relay method, like the call transfer, is used to convey information from a 9-1-1 center to a dispatch point. In call relay, the information is transferred to the dispatch point, not the caller. This transfer can be done by telephone, radio or by computer system.

CALL REFERRAL - When a call is answered by a communication center that is not the right agency to handle a caller's situation, they may be referred to the appropriate agency by giving the caller a phone number.

ESSENTIAL FEATURES OF AN ENHANCED 9-1-1 SYSTEM

AUTOMATIC NUMBER IDENTIFICATION (ANI) - The ability to display the telephone number of the telephone from which the 9-1-1 call was made.

In the wireless industry this feature, which identifies the caller's cellular telephone number on cellular calls, is referred to as **Phase I of the FCC's cellular location standards**. Public safety officials and providers of wireless services are currently working on Phase I wireless issues that will provide the cellular phone number when a 9-1-1 call is placed.

Demands for hard-line telephone type services in the wireless industry have led to developments in technology that allow PSAPs to identify cellular numbers and cellular caller location **(Phase II)**.

AUTOMATIC LOCATION IDENTIFICATION (ALI) - The ability to display the address of the telephone from which the 9-1-1 call was made. Phase II (wireless) information provides X Y coordinates with cellular calls in many parts of Washington State. The X Y coordinates approximate latitude/longitude using cellular towers or shows an approximate location of a mapping system tied in with an agency's phone or CAD system. Other phones are equipped with global positioning systems that are run through a satellite.

The public safety industry and cellular service providers are attempting to deliver Phase II wireless information that will provide, within a set number of feet, the location of a wireless caller.

ANI and ALI (pronounced "Annie" and "Allie") are separate functions.

SELECTIVE ROUTING – The location of the caller is identified by telephone company equipment and then the call is routed to the correct PSAP.

Routing of wireless calls may be determined county by county. Other variables such as location of the cellular telephone vs. location of the cellular site it is using may determine where the call is routed. *For this reason, determining where the caller is located is imperative*. This may include asking a caller to identify from which city or county s/he is calling. There have been instances where cellular 9-1-1 calls have been received from outside the region.

EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES

GPS – Global Positioning System- a system for providing precise location, which is based on data, transmitted from a constellation of satellites. This is a commonly used technology for determining location.

GPS is a technology that has been around for a number of years. It is used in public safety communications for features like Automated Vehicle Location (AVL) systems that may be used to identify and track emergency response vehicles. It is available to the public through GPS devices that allow persons to determine their latitude/longitude/altitude through the device. GPS technology is used in telematics (see below) and is a technology used in wireless 9-1-1, Phase II – ALI to determine within a preset standard, the location of a cellular phone.

Voice over IP (VoIP) – Voice over Internet Protocols – telephones (telephone technology) that can allow transfer of voice "calls" over Internet connections.

Voice over Internet Protocol technology allows people to use their computers in a manner that resembles a telephone to stream voice or other data that has been digitalized.

VoIP has become more reliable in relation to 911 services, as carriers are clearly telling their customers that they MUST check and update address information within the system.

A VoIP customer who uses an internet connection with their VoIP telephone elsewhere in the country or around the world, will have the call routed to their listed "home" PSAP! It is incumbent upon subscribers to update and maintain accurate address information with their VoIP service provider. It is incumbent upon the Call Taker to ask and verify the location of the caller (or caller's phone) ***ON EVERY CALL, EVERY TIME***.

When Internet Services are down, VoIP phones are down. In areas where a cable carrying Internet Service is disrupted, so will VoIP phone service be interrupted.

Telematics

Telematics refers to what are usually private enterprises that provide service to the public with the use of **GPS and/or cellular technologies**.

Telematics service providers (**TSPs**) offer services to customers that include anti-theft protection, concierge services such as driving directions, remote vehicle unlock, emergency reporting through the telephone/GPS system in the vehicle, and Automatic Collision/Crash Notification (ACN) or Advanced Automatic Collision Notification (AACN).

In addition, telematics has become more common in the trucking industry. Technologies which are currently available:
- Position mapping
- Panic button capability, either wireless or in-dash
- Communications, email, pre-formatted or free text, in-cab
- Load tracking
- Vehicle slowdown (stolen vehicles)
- Certain concierge services such as remote vehicle unlock

Future capabilities emerging from the trucking industry include:
- Emergency response agency connectivity
- Call center provision of information to agencies lacking computer access to on-line data.
- Incident response information for shipment tracking.
- HazMat data information delivery.

Telematics service providers have call center staffing similar to a public safety communications center. They are typically available twenty-four hours a day and can be accessed directly from the vehicle. 911 centers may receive calls from TSPs about a variety of issues that include:

- Theft of a vehicle equipped with a device that can track the vehicle with GPS. Of the Telematics companies visited by APCO committee members working on training standards for the Telematics industry, OnStar and ATX, both required formal police reports with case numbers before vehicle tracking would be commenced. The TSP employee would be in direct contact with the comm center or law enforcement personnel to provide them updated information about the location of the vehicle.

- For certain 2009 and newer models of GM vehicles, there will be “vehicle slowdown” capabilities. After a verified theft report has been taken and law enforcement has an actual visual sighting of the vehicle, OnStar can remotely disconnect the vehicle’s accelerator, causing the vehicle to slow to a stop.

- Location is determined by using the GPS system in conjunction with a mapping system.

- On-board emergency communications – someone in the vehicle activates an emergency button which alerts the TSP call center. Call center employees then open up a cellular connection to the vehicle speakerphone. Call center employees may be able to hear inside the vehicle in a “covert mode”.

- Concierge services may include making calls such as reservations or other calls on behalf of the subscriber or remote vehicle unlock. In addition, with the use of GPS and a mapping system, call center employees can give driving directions to the subscriber as needed. SOME TELEMATICS COMPANIES HAVE RECENTLY STARTED TO OFFER EMD INSTRUCTIONS FOR MEDICAL EMERGENCIES OR ACCIDENTS!

- ACN – AACN – Automatic (or Advanced Automatic) Collision Notification – the TSP receives a signal from the vehicle indicating that the vehicle has been involved in an accident. Some of the information that may be provided to the PSAP call receiver may include:
    - **Rollover information** – indicating a rollover accident. They may be able to tell the call receiver whether the vehicle has come to rest on its wheels or top.
    - **Multiple impacts** – the TSP employee may be able to tell you if the vehicle has sustained multiple impacts.
    - **Airbag deployment** – if airbags are deployed.
    - **Seatbelt tensioner** deployment may indicate deployment of airbags or another indicator of collision.
    - **Delta velocity** –a measurement of crash severity measured by miles per hour (MPH) and determined by calculating the rate of *deceleration* forces and includes the direction of impact. The relay of delta velocity information may, in the future, help determine EMS response (BLS, ALS, etc.).
        - MPH does *not* indicate the speed at which the vehicle was traveling at the time of the accident.
    - **The area of the vehicle involved in the impact**
    - **Rollover -** and how the vehicle landed (upside down, etc.)
    - **Injury severity score (ISS)** - a numerical "score" achieved by using a formula that uses pre-determined ACN criteria.
    - **Persons onboard** - The number of people in the vehicle. Information may include:
        - Adult/child
        - Seatbelt worn or not worn

Agency policies regarding Telematics Service Providers should prevail, however, generally, telematics calls are processed as any call from another call center. **The following is the minimum information that should be obtained:**

- **Location of the incident, vehicle, party, etc.**
- **What is the problem?**
- **Vehicle, suspect, subscriber or other information as pertinent to the request for service.**
- **Operator name/number, call back number.**
- **Case number of any case involving theft, missing person, etc.**

Other Services Using Telematics or Cellular Technology

There are other services available through vendors. These may include:

- Emergency impaired person locator devices
    - For persons with mental faculty issues, dementia, Alzheimer's, etc.
    - Devices fit on the body, i.e., like a watch.
    - If/When the individual goes missing – caregivers or vendor can activate the device which calls 9-1-1 in hopes of using Phase II technology to determine the location of the missing person,

Handling Telematics Calls

Handling a call from a Telematics Service Provider (TSPs) is like handling any other call.

- **Obtain location of the incident**
- **Obtain incident details**
- **Obtain a name or operator number**
- **Any pertinent case numbers (stolen vehicles, missing endangered persons, etc.)**
- **Obtain callback number**

When dealing with calls where there are endangerment factors, ask the TSP operator if they can listen in with "**covert mode**".

AMBER ALERT

AMBER Alert information is being provided under the technology section because of the use of technology (the Internet, cable TV and Department of Transportation signage).

This information was updated by the Washington State Patrol for its inclusion here:

Washington Statewide AMBER Alert Plan

PUBLIC WEB PORTAL ADDRESS: www.AMBERAlert.com
LEAP (Law Enforcement Alerting Portal) address: https://leap.amberalert.com

The Washington Statewide AMBER Alert Plan is named for 9-year-old Amber Hagerman of Arlington, Texas. In 1996, she was abducted while riding her bicycle and murdered. This plan organizes a rapid response by law enforcement, broadcasters, and the public to recover an abducted child and apprehend the suspect.

America's
Missing
Broadcast
Emergency
Response

1. Introduction

AMBER Alert in Washington is a program of voluntary cooperation between **broadcasters, cable systems, and local and state law enforcement agencies** to enhance the public's ability to assist in recovering abducted children. AMBER Alert notification is supported by the **AMBER Alert Web Portal (Portal) and the Emergency Alert System (EAS)**. The Federal Communications Commission has authorized activation of the EAS for AMBER Alerts using the "**child abduction emergency"** code.

2. Scope and Authority of Statewide and Local AMBER Alert Plans

The Washington Statewide AMBER Alert Plan solely governs and authorizes the use of EAS and the Portal for AMBER Alerts throughout Washington State.

The Washington AMBER Alert Statewide Plan takes effect when the local law enforcement agency has determined in its investigation that the incident qualifies under the criteria of the Washington Statewide AMBER Alert Plan and the local law enforcement agency requests WSP to initiate activation of the EAS and the Portal.

This statewide plan recognizes approved local AMBER Alert plans, which specify local law enforcement agency procedures to investigate a child abduction case, approve AMBER Alert activations, coordinate community response and direct the recovery of the child.

Local AMBER Alert plans previously approved by the State Emergency Communications Committee (SECC) are recognized as approved plans provided that activation criteria satisfy the Statewide AMBER Alert criteria in section 5.

By January 1, 2005 all agencies without an approved plan will develop a plan or have a mutual aid agreement in place with an agency that has an approved plan.

The approval process for local AMBER Alert Plans will include approval by the Local Area Emergency Communications Committee (LAECC) and the SECC.

3. AMBER Alert Activation Approval and Scope

Approval for activation of an AMBER Alert will be by the investigating agency, contingent on the agency having an existing approved AMBER Alert Plan. No further review of the decision is required. Investigating agencies that do not have an approved plan will use an agency with an approved plan through established mutual aid agreements as defined in section 2 above. Otherwise WSP will be the approving agency. No other organizations are authorized to approve AMBER Alert activations.

WSP (and agencies approving alerts for other agencies through mutual aid agreements) are accountable to provide timely activation decisions that are consistent with this plan’s criteria and cognizant of the circumstances.

All AMBER Alert activations of the EAS and the Portal will be statewide in scope.

When an agency with an approved AMBER Alert plan decides to activate an AMBER Alert the agency must notify WSP. WSP will provide the local agency secured access to the Portal. WSP, as the sole point of contact, will coordinate all AMBER Alert activities with the Emergency Management Division and the Department of Transportation on the local agency’s behalf.

Following authorized approval of AMBER Alert activation and notification to WSP:

☐ The Washington State Emergency Management Division (EMD) will activate the EAS for an AMBER Alert and is the only agency authorized to do so.

☐The local law enforcement agency is authorized to use the Portal to activate, update, and cancel the AMBER Alert as the case warrants. Upon request of the local law enforcement agency, WSP may activate the Portal.

The approving agency will identify a point of contact for media and other law enforcement agencies at the time of activation.

When an incident does not qualify under the criteria for an AMBER Alert, WSP will offer press releases, the Missing Children Clearing House, and other notification methods available at that time.

4. Governance of the Statewide AMBER Alert Plan

Local and state law enforcement, broadcasters, and emergency management officials combine their efforts through the following Statewide AMBER Alert governance model to recover abducted children.

State AMBER Alert Manager

WSP is the lead agency for the Washington Statewide AMBER Alert Plan.

The Chief of WSP is the State AMBER Alert Manager and has final decision-making authority over all aspects of the Statewide AMBER Alert Plan. While the Chief of WSP is ultimately accountable for program success, this responsibility is shared with other entities that form the AMBER Alert Advisory Committee.

AMBER Alert Advisory Committee
The AMBER Alert Advisory Committee provides administrative oversight to develop, implement, review and recommend revisions to all aspects of the Washington Statewide AMBER Alert Plan. Such recommendations are made to the State AMBER Alert Manager. The AMBER Alert Advisory Committee charter further defines its purpose, membership, authority and decision making process.

AMBER Alert Review Committee
The AMBER Alert Review Committee conducts after action reviews of all AMBER Alert activation requests and alerts. It evaluates the effectiveness and timeliness of key decisions, actions and results. The committee recommends policy and procedure improvements to the AMBER Alert Advisory Committee. This review committee is convened by the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs and is further defined by its charter.

State Emergency Communications Committee
This committee has been delegated authority by the FCC to create the State EAS plan and manage EAS operations in Washington. Broadcasters must comply with the SECC's State EAS Plan to be in compliance with FCC regulations.

5. AMBER Alert Criteria

All elements 1 through 5 should be satisfied, after considering all the facts and circumstances of the incident, for the incident to qualify as an AMBER Alert.

a. **The child is under eighteen (18) years** of age and is known to be abducted and is not a runaway or a throwaway from home.
b. **The abducted child is believed to be in danger of death or serious bodily injury**.
c. **The AMBER Alert activation should occur within 4 hours** of the event qualifying under the criteria as an AMBER Alert unless circumstances or the timeliness of the information warrant otherwise.
d. **There must be enough descriptive information available to believe that AMBER Alert activation will assist in the recovery of the child**. (Must include as much of the following section's information as possible)
e. **The report must be investigated by a law enforcement agency**.

Examples of the information needed to help determine if an AMBER Alert will assist in recovery may include:

- Where the abduction took place.
- A specific physical description of the child [can include clothing worn when last seen; height, weight, age, hair and eye color, hair length, any additional distinguishing physical characteristics].
- A physical description of the abductor [can include approximate height, weight, hair color/length, eye/skin color, clothing; any distinguishing physical characteristics].
- Place last seen.
- Description of the vehicle [can include color, make, model, license number, approximate year (older, newer)].

6. Broadcaster Follow-up Announcement Schedule

Following the broadcast of the AMBER Alert EAS message through the state relay network, the message will be forwarded through broadcast media outlets.

At this time and throughout the alert, broadcasters should refer to the Portal at **www.AMBERAlert.com** as the single source for the latest detailed AMBER Alert information and photos. The local law enforcement agency in charge will add updated information to the Portal as it becomes available. The Portal will automatically push simultaneous notification that new information is available to broadcasters, law enforcement, the public, and many partners who forward AMBER Alerts to a wide collection of audiences.

Once the station has transmitted the initial AMBER Alert:

a. During the first three (3) hours after the broadcast of the initial AMBER Alert message the station should broadcast AMBER Alert follow-up announcements every 20 minutes, at a minimum, unless the AMBER Alert is terminated sooner. These messages should be announcements voiced by station personnel and can be incorporated into regular station programming as the station sees fit

b. The AMBER Alert follow-up announcements must not be a retransmission of the initial AMBER Alert, nor include the EAS header tones, event codes, etc.

c. During the second three (3) hours stations with live personnel should broadcast an AMBER Alert follow-up announcement once every half-hour, at a minimum, unless the AMBER Alert is terminated sooner.

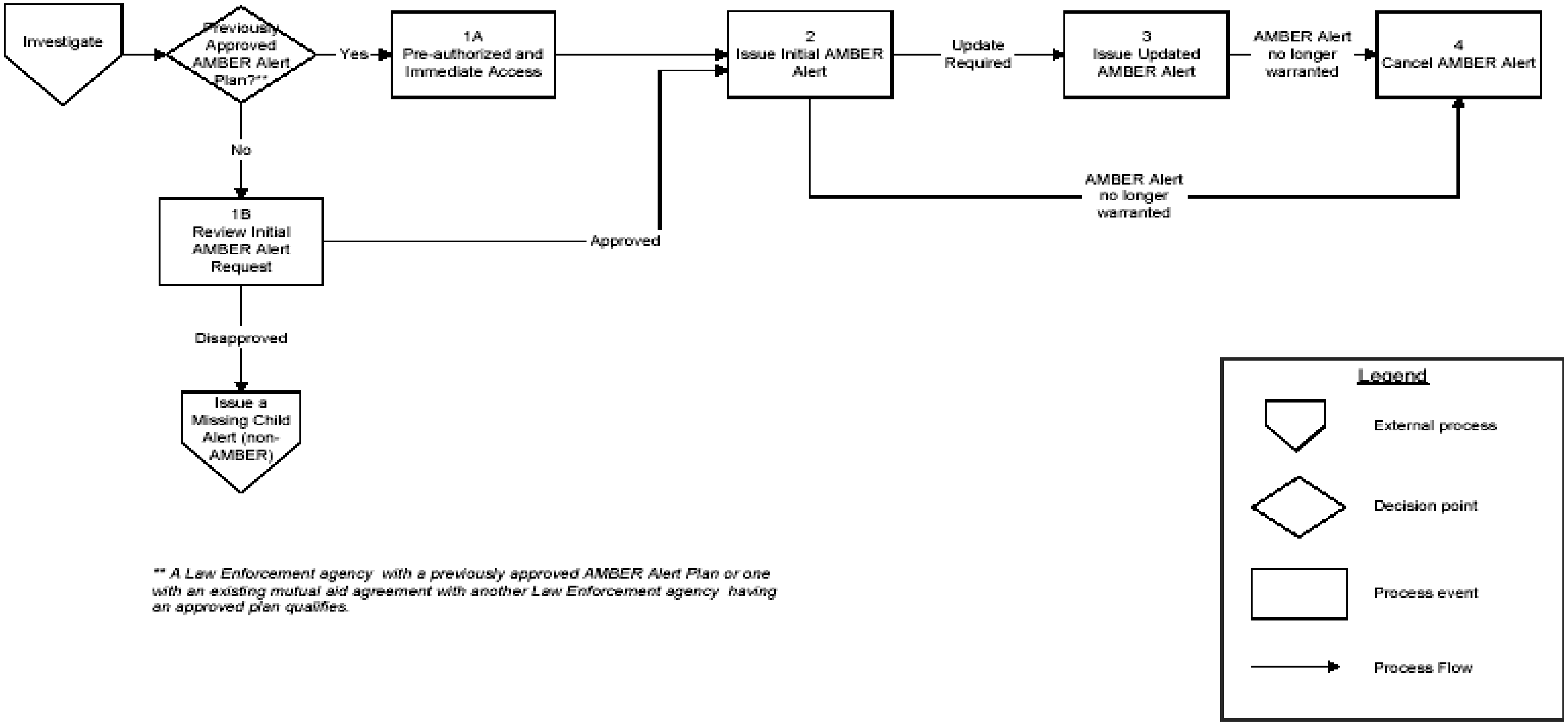
d. After six (6) hours, the station, in its discretion, may continue to broadcast the AMBER Alert follow-up announcements until the AMBER Alert is formally terminated by the activating law enforcement agency, or at the agency's request.

7. Procedures

The following diagram and associated event descriptions (in table format) reflects the high level AMBER Alert process flow and is further detailed in the AMBER Alert User Procedures.

The following diagram shows how the AMBER Alert process flows:

Process Diagram


Investigate
Previously Approved AMBER Alert Plan?**
Yes
1A Pre-authorized and Immediate Access
2 Issue Initial AMBER Alert
Update Required
3 Issue Updated AMBER Alert
AMBER Alert no longer warranted
4 Cancel AMBER Alert
No
AMBER Alert no longer warranted
1B Review Initial AMBER Alert Request
Approved
Disapproved
Issue a Missing Child Alert (non-AMBER)
Legend
External process
Decision point
Process event
Process Flow

*** A Law Enforcement agency with a previously approved AMBER Alert Plan or one with an existing mutual aid agreement with another Law Enforcement agency having an approved plan qualifies.*

Process Event	Law Enforcement Agencies **(LEA)**	**Washington State Patrol (WSP)**	**WA State Emergency Management Division (EMD)**	**Broadcasters**	**WA Dept. of Transportation (WSDOT)**
Investigate Incident (External Processes)	**1. Investigate & compile the initial information**				
1A. Pre-authorized & Immediate Access (For those having a previously approved AMBER alert Plan or having developed mutual aid agreements with another LEA with an approved plan.)	**1. Determine that the AMBER Alert criteria is met** **2. Notify WSP that LEA is activating an AMBER Alert** **3. Reference you have a previously approved AMBER Plan**	1. Check list of approved plans & proceed immediately with providing the LEA approval to activate their alert through the LEAP web portal. 2. Begin coordination with EMD, DOT.			

Process Event	**Law Enforcement Agencies (LEA)**	**Washington State Patrol (WSP)**	**WA State Emergency Management Division (EMD)**	**Broadcasters**	**WA Dept. of Transportation (WSDOT)**
1B. Initial Review of AMBER Alert request (For those without a previously approved AMBER Alert Plan or having a developed mutual aid agreement with another LEA with an approved plan.)	**1. Determine that the AMBER Alert criteria is met** **2. Request WSP to issue an AMBER Alert**	1. Review & approve or disapprove LEA's request based on the approved statewide criteria 2. Notify LEA of approval			
If AMBER Alert criteria are not met: Issue a Missing Child Alert (non-Amber) (External Process)	1. Receive notification of disapproval 2. Utilize other means (from WSP) to communicate "missing child" information 3. Examples: -Missing Children Clearing House -CISD staff to work the tip line -TRAK system -HITS Unit -other resources	1. Notify LEA of disapproval			

Process Event	Law Enforcement Agencies **(LEA)**	**Washington State Patrol (WSP)**	**WA State Emergency Management Division (EMD)**	**Broadcasters**	**WA Dept. of Transportation (WSDOT)**
2. Issue Initial AMBER Alert	**1. Receive approval from local WSP Communications to activate alert.** **2. Issue the AMBER Alert via the Portal** **3. May request EMD to forward the statewide tip line** **4. Staff the tip line that was forwarded from EMD** **5. Responsible for the ongoing investigation**	1. Change LEA access in LEAP to be approved to activate their own alert. 2. Notify a single point of contact in EMD to issue the AMBER Alert via EAS 3. Notify a single point of contact in WSDOT to activate the Electronic Highway Signs and the Highway Advisory Radio	1. Receive the directive from WSP to issue the AMBER Alert via EAS using code "CAE" 2. Receive AMBER Alert information via the Portal 3. Issue the AMBER Alert via EAS 4. Activate NAWAS (911 Centers) 5. If requested by LEA, forward the statewide tip line to the LEA for staffing incoming tips	1. Receive the AMBER Alert via EAS 2. Receive the AMBER Alert via Portal 3. Broadcast the AMBER Alert announcements (Ref: #6 above)	1. Receive the request from WSP to activate the Electronic Highway Signs & the Highway Advisory Radio 2. Receive the AMBER Alert information via the Portal 3. Activate the Electronic Highway Signs and the Highway Advisory Radio

Process Event	Law Enforcement Agencies **(LEA)**	**Washington State Patrol (WSP)**	**WA State Emergency Management Division (EMD)**	**Broadcasters**	**WA Dept. of Transportation (WSDOT)**
3. Issue Updated AMBER Alert	**1. Disseminate updated information via Portal and other means as appropriate** **2. May request WSP to disseminate updated information via PIO network**	1. Receive updated information via Portal 2. If requested by LEA, disseminate updated information via PIO network 3. If conditions warrant, request EMD to issue update via EAS & DOT to update the Electronic Highway Signs & the Highway Advisory Radio	1. Receive updated information via Portal 2. If requested by WSP, issue update via EAS	1. Receive updated information via Portal 2. Broadcast updated AMBER Alert information 3. Go to AMBER Alert Web Portal to obtain information	1. Receive updated information via Portal 2. Update the Electronic Highway Signs & the Highway Advisory Radio (after conferring with WSP if necessary)

Process Event	Law Enforcement Agencies **(LEA)**	**Washington State Patrol (WSP)**	**WA State Emergency Management Division (EMD)**	**Broadcasters**	**WA Dept. of Transportation (WSDOT)**
4. Cancel AMBER Alert	**1. Determine that the AMBER Alert Activation is no longer warranted** **2. Enter cancel information into the Portal**	1. Receive cancellation from LEA via LEAP 2. Notify a single point of contact in EMD of cancellation 3. Notify a single point of contact in DOT of cancellation	1. Receive cancellation request from WSP 2. Issue cancellation using EAS code "ADR"	1. Receive cancellation request via EAS (using "ADR" code) 2. Receive cancellation via Portal 3. Broadcast cancellation as a news item or other means—but do not rebroadcast EAS cancellation message	1. Receive cancellation via Portal 2. Receive cancellation notice from WSP 3. Cancel the Electronic Highway Signs and the Highway Advisory Radio

8. Sample AMBER Alert EAS Message Script (for use by EMD)

This is an activation of the AMBER Alert System.
We have just received this important information regarding an abducted child in
______________________________. The ______________________________ is
(Area, District, City, and/or County) (Law Enforcement Jurisdiction(s))
looking for a child who was last seen at ____
(Location)
and is believed to be in danger. The child's name is ___________________. He/She is
(Name)
______ years old, _______with ______ hair and was last seen wearing ____________
(age) (gender) (color)
___________________________________. Authorities say that the child may be in the
(Description of clothing)
company of _________________________________ and they may be traveling in a
(Name, Description, clothing, etc.)
__________________________ that was last seen heading _________________
(Vehicle make, model, color, license plate #)
_____________________________. If you have any information on the whereabouts of
(Direction and street/city location)
this child, ________________________, please contact ____________ immediately.
(Name or Description of Child) (contact telephone number)

Sample AMBER Broadcaster Follow-up Announcement Text

"K*** has an Amber Alert advisory. An Amber Alert has been issued for Washington State. K____ (listeners/viewers) are advised to look for (vehicle description), driven by (suspect description). The victim is (victim details) has been abducted by a non-family member and is at risk of physical harm. If you see a (vehicle description), please dial 911 immediately, and tell the operator you have an Amber Alert sighting for the Washington State Patrol dispatch. Again, if you see (vehicle description), please dial 911."

Web Portal Address **www.AMBERAlert.com**

Unit References:
Washington State Patrol – AMBER Alert & Endangered Missing Person Advisory Plan
APCO International Best Practices PSAPs/Telematics Call Processing

Unit 2

Role of the Call Taker

UNIT TITLE: **UNIT 2 – ROLE OF THE CALL TAKER**

LEARNING OBJECTIVES FOR THIS UNIT:

At the end of this unit of study when given a real or hypothetical scenario or question, the student will be able to:

- Identify the sources from which you experience stress, as defined in the curriculum
- List the stages General Adaptation Syndrome
- Identify the three major approaches to managing stress
- Describe the situations identified in the curriculum that describe confidential information that should not be disclosed by the Call Taker
- List the 4 Command Staff positions in the Incident Command System
- List the 4 *Functional Areas* (sections) within the Incident Command System
- Identify the 5 stages of team building or group dynamics
- List the Active Listening Techniques described in the curriculum
- Describe the ways a Call Taker can provide excellent customer service using examples cited in the curriculum
- List the four pillars of Justice Based Policing as described in the curriculum

WHAT IS AN EMERGENCY?

For purposes of this curriculum, an emergency is defined as *a threat to life or property*.

WHAT IS A TELECOMMUNICATOR?

A person who is employed as an emergency telephone worker (Call Taker) or public safety dispatcher whose primary duties are receiving, processing and transmitting public safety information received from the 9-1-1 reporting system.

For the purposes of this curriculum, the following definitions apply:

Call Taker/Call Receiver: The person, regardless of their job title, who answers and processes a call. This may or may not be an actual position within the communications center.

Dispatcher: Position within the communications center or department responsible for dispatching field units to calls for service.

Telecommunicator: Interchangeable term for definitions above.

WHAT IS AN EMERGENCY MEDICAL DISPATCHER (EMD)?

This "dispatcher" is usually a Call Taker. A telecommunicator who is also responsible for processing medical calls is a medical call dispatcher. This may also include special training certification such as an Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD) certificate. They may use a set of protocols to determine the medical problem, appropriate medical response, and provide pre-arrival medical instructions to callers.

FUNCTIONS OF THE TELECOMMUNICATOR

CALL TAKING: receiving calls from the public on emergency and non-emergency telephone lines. The telecommunicator provides a "vital link" between the citizens and emergency services providers. The telecommunicator is the facilitator of communications between the public and the emergency service providers.

DISPATCH: communicating directly with the emergency service providers (by radio, telephone, pager, etc.).

Identified Duties, Tasks, Knowledge and Skills

The Association of Public Safety Communications Officials, Inc. (APCO) is the recognized organization for the submission of national standards to the American National Standards Institute (ANSI). APCO creates ANSI recognized training standards for a number of public safety communications positions including Telecommunicator.

The 2011 proposed Telecommunicator Standard includes the recommended training standard for Public Safety Call Taker. The purpose of this or any other standard is to assist industry workers in achieving a successful result of their work product based upon a standardized method or a set of most effective (sometimes called "best") practices. The purpose of incorporating this and other standards into Telecommunicator I is to enable public safety Call Takers in Washington State to serve their communities using these identified practices to improve the outcome of ***EVERY CALL, EVERY TIME***.

During the standards development process, panels of high performing incumbent Call Takers from around the United States were used to identify the duties, tasks, knowledge, skill and traits of the position. Some of these findings are listed here. You will notice that the underlined Knowledge or Skills, Duties and Tasks listed below, will be those that we will include in this course.

The statement that these panels put forth that sums up the position of Public Safety Call Taker was this:

One who processes incoming calls, while providing excellent customer service, by gathering, analyzing, prioritizing and relaying information to best ensure the safety of the public and responders.

KNOWLEDGE

Here are topics that were identified by high-performing Public Safety Call Takers as general areas of knowledge for successful Call Takers.
- Geography which may include:
    - Jurisdiction boundaries
    - Common locations or landmarks
    - Addressing
    - Demographics
- Spelling & grammar
- Telephone & computer operation basics
- **Stress Management/CISM knowledge and understanding**
- Scope of authority
    - Chain of command
- **Liability**
    - Understanding liability issues facing the telecommunicator or public safety agency
    - What is the duty owed to customers?
- Terminology/Acronyms – general and agency-specific
- **Understanding of job duties and roles**
- Agency/industry culture
- **Group dynamics**
    - **Good interpersonal skills**
- Agency Mission & values
- Performance standards
- **Laws, statutes, & codes**
- **Incident command system (ICS), national incident management system (NIMS)**
- Cultural awareness
- Government standards
- Standard operating procedures or guidelines (SOPs, SOGs)

SKILLS

These are the skills identified as necessary to be an effective Public Safety Call Taker.

- Keyboarding/typing
- Multi-tasking
- Decision-making
- Critical thinking
- Setting boundaries
- Verbal and written communication skills
- **Team work**
    - Effective team player
    - Positive team attitude
- **Active listening skills**
- **Customer service skills**
- Computer/telephone skills
- **Interview skills**
- **Call control skills**

IDENTIFIED DUTIES FOR PUBLIC SAFETY CALL TAKERS

There were 3 major duties (and many tasks and sub-tasks that support those duties) that came out of the Public Safety Call Taker occupational analyses.

The duties were generally identified as:

- Provide Call Taker Services
- Utilize Available Resources
- Enhance Professional Competence

PROVIDE CALL TAKER SERVICES

Looking at Provide Call Taker Services, there were a number of tasks and sub-tasks included in this duty.

They were:

A. **SCREEN INITIAL CALLS**
    a. Prioritize call answering sequence
    b. Answer call promptly
    c. Answer calls with the proper greeting
    d. Project professional demeanor

B. **DEMONSTRATE CLEAR AND EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS**
    a. Actively listen
    b. Convey respect
    c. Convey empathy
    d. Enunciate clearly
    e. Avoid jargon
    f. Control the call

C. **ASCERTAIN INCIDENT INFORMATION**
    a. Obtain and verify location(s)
    b. Obtain and verify contact information
    c. Determine scene, caller and responder safety

D. **DOCUMENT INFORMATION ACCURATELY**
   a. Include incident urgency/severity details
   b. Establish call priority
   c. Label call type

E. **MANAGE CHALLENGING CALLERS**

F. **TAKE APPROPRIATE ACTION**

UTILIZE AVAILABLE RESOURCES

A. **OPERATE PHONE SYSTEM EFFECTIVELY**
   a. Interpret ANI/ALI
   b. Perform conference calls
   c. Perform transfers

B. **OPERATE AVAILABLE COMPUTER SYSTEMS**
   a. Utilize CAD programs
   b. Utilize maps appropriately

C. **USE TTY & RELAY SERVICES**
   a. Comply with APCO TTY training standard

D. **UTILIZE LANGUAGE RESOURCES**
   a. Language service providers
   b. Language interpreters

E. **UTILIZE REFERENCE RESOURCES**
   a. Co-workers
   b. Training manuals
   c. Other agencies
   d. Internet
   e. Other equipment

ENHANCE PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE

A. **COMPLETE TRAINING/CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS**
   a. Completes training requirements
   b. Actively seek additional training
   c. Obtain/maintain required certifications
   d. Complete continuing education/career development

B. **MEET/EXCEED PERFORMANCE STANDARDS**
   a. Demonstrate job proficiency
   b. Comply with state/federal regulations
   c. Maintain professional demeanor
   d. Evaluate personal performance

C. **COMPLY WITH SOPs/SOGs**
   a. Remain current on policies
   b. Recommend SOP/SOG updates

D. **UTILIZE NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES**

E. **PARTICIPATE IN PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS**

F. REVIEW PROFESSIONAL PUBLICATIONS

These were the important components of the job of public safety Call Taker. In this resource guide you will find information on many of these topics. Some of the areas of your job listed here are specific to your agency. The caveat that will affect *all* of the information in this guide is this: ***YOUR AGENCY POLICY, SOP, SOG OR EXPECTATIONS*** **will always govern**. We will try to generally provide information gained from focus groups around the state regarding generic effective practices, but you must keep in mind that every agency has different procedures and that your agency practices always takes precedence.

As you can see many of the knowledge, duties and tasks listed here would be specific to your agency.

Look at the first knowledge topic: Geography. We will not be talking about the geography of your agency in this class for obvious reasons, but we can introduce you to some of the more general topics.

STRESS MANAGEMENT

One area identified in the "knowledge" area of the Occupational Analysis for Call Taker, was the importance of having knowledge of Stress Management.

Because we have a significant stress management unit in Telecommunicator II – we will go over a brief overview of stress management in this resource guide.

You will see stress defined in a number of ways; however, for purposes here, we'll talk about stress as being: **the condition or feeling experienced when a person perceives that "[1]demands exceed the personal and social resources that the individual is able to mobilize."** Sometimes we define a Mass/Multiple Casualty Incident as one that depletes the responding agency's available resources. Then we can equate the negative stress as occurring when a person runs out of the personal, physical or emotional resources needed to cope with or manage the event.

You experience stress from three basic sources: **your environment, your body and your thoughts**.

Fight/Flight: In the 1930's the endocrinologist Hans Selye, coined the term "stress" to describe an organism's reaction to a perceived threat Selye researched stress and its effects on the body. "The autonomic nervous system provides the rapid response to stress commonly known as the fight-or-flight response, engaging the sympathetic nervous system and withdrawing the parasympathetic nervous system, thereby enacting cardiovascular, respiratory, gastrointestinal, renal, and endocrine changes". The Fight-or-Flight response is one kind of stress.

He was able to trace the body's reaction to stress. Problems, imagined or real can cause the thinking part of your brain to send an alarm signal to the hypothalamus (the bridge between the brain and the endocrine system). The hypothalamus is a main switch for stress response and is located in the mid-brain. The stress signal stimulates the Sympathetic Nervous System (SNS) to make a series of changes in your body. Your heart rate, blood volume and blood pressure all go up in order to pump more blood to the muscles that are tensing to respond to the threat. Blood moves away from the outer body/skin in order to prepare for potential blood loss in an attack. Sugars enter the blood and pupils dilate to sharpen vision and your hearing becomes more acute.

---

[1] Tsigos, C. &. (2002). Journal of Psychosomatic Research, 53, 865-871. *Journal of Psychosomatic Research, 53* (53), 865-871.

Selye studied rats and animals by subjecting them to stressful stimuli. His studies found that there were three general reactions or states which he called the **General Adaptation Syndrome** (GAS).

General Adaption Syndrome is the second type of stress: The stages are:

Alarm – when the threat or stress stimuli is recognized or identified and the response to it is one of alarm. The fight-or-flight response occurs in this stage.

Resistance – occurs if the threat or stress persists or continues and is a means of coping with the stress. The body will eventually tire from the strain of attempting to meet the demands of the stress.

Exhaustion – occurs when the body's resources have been depleted and the body is unable to continue to function in a normal manner.

Signs of stress may manifest themselves as behavioral, physical, cognitive or emotional.

Can there be such a thing as "positive" stress? Yes, Selye called it eustress.

EUSTRESS can be defined here as a stress that *increases* ones performance.

DISTRESS is the negative type of stress. It is the type of stress that could lead to health problems. DISTRESS can occur in stage three of the General Adaptation Syndrome – the exhaustion phase.

When we look at our "problem" update that we work on in our PBL course, later in the week and think about all the factors, priorities, and information competing for our attention, we can see how certain events can be stressful.

The significant-event type of stress is one that as telecommunicators, you will deal with on a regular basis. You probably work with co-workers who rise to these occasions and work through the event with no significant problems. One of the ideas we would like you to take away from these discussions is the concept of *identifying when* you begin to feel yourself being stressed. If you can identify when you are beginning to feel "stressed" (negative stress), you will be much better equipped to begin to deal with it before negative stress begins to affect your health or emotional wellbeing.

Excerpts from an article in Fortune Magazine which cited a study that said more than half the people in the US viewed job stress as a major problem. It cites that the number of people who used sick leave due to stress tripled in the past 4 years. 42% said that their coworkers need help managing stress.

The Stress Tools information we will provide with the book and our discussion here is to help you perform successfully and more happily under pressures that come with your career in public safety communications.

- **Stress is the condition or feeling experienced when a person perceives that "demands exceed the personal and social resources the individual is able to mobilize".**

People feel little stress when they have the time, experience and resources to handle a situation. They feel great stress when they do not see themselves as being able to handle the demands upon them. That stress is a negative experience. It is not an inevitable consequence of an event. It depends a great deal on the individuals' perceptions of a situation and their real ability to cope with it.

We talked about short-term stress when we spoke about Fight-or-Flight and long-term stress in the General Adaptation Syndrome. The first is a basic survival instinct, while the second instinct is a long-term effect of exposure to stress. The third mechanism comes from the way we *think and interpret* the situations in which we find ourselves.

The three mechanisms can be part of the same stress response. Let's look at them individually and then discuss how they can fit together, all in an effort to help you identify and react to stressors in your life in the most productive way.

Consider behaviors you may have observed at work with co-workers – that indicate to you they are "stressed".

These behaviors or symptoms reduce our ability to work effectively with other people. In the communications center, most of us work as part of a team. Getting along effectively with our teammates is a priority. The intensity of our focus on survival interferes with our ability to make fine judgments and to be able to draw information from many sources, i.e., multi-task.

There are very few situations in the communications center where triggering of the fight-or-flight response is useful. This is different from eustress. This is distress.

When we look at the three stages of G.A.S., (Alarm phase, resistance phase, exhaustion phase, we should note that exhaustion contributes strongly to what is referred to as "burnout".

Stress and the Way We Think

In our workday life, much of our stress is subtle and occurs without obvious threat to survival.

Examples of where stress, in general, comes from.

Workload
Mandatory overtime
Conflicting priorities (work, family, other)
Inconsistent values (yours, co-workers, organization)
Co-worker conflict
Environmental
Other?

Not only do these things reduce our performance as we divert mental effort into handling them, but they can also cause a great deal of unhappiness or lack of personal satisfaction.

In becoming stressed, people must therefore make two main judgments; first they must feel threatened by the situation and secondly they must judge whether their capabilities and resources are sufficient to meet the threat.

How might discord with people in your workplace create a perception threat?

- Threat to our social or professional standing
- How other people view us, or their opinion of us
- Promotability – will this affect your ability to promote within the organization?

Just as with real threats to our survival, these perceived threats trigger the hormonal fight-or-flight response along with its negative consequences.

Mental or emotional stress triggers the fight-or-flight response and if this stress is sustained for a long time, the end result can be exhaustion and burnout.

Stress and Your Health

Negative stress effects can damage your health either as direct physiological damage to our bodies, or as behavioral effects.

The behavioral effects of an over-stressed lifestyle can be we eat, drink or smoke too much, as a way of getting chemical relief from stress. Not getting any or enough exercise, proper nutrition or enough sleep adds to negative health effects.

The link between stress and heart disease is well established. It causes raised heart rate, high blood pressure putting tension on our arteries. As the body heals this damage, the artery walls scar and thicken which can reduce the supply of blood and oxygen to the heart.

Stress has also been found to impair the immune system which is one explanation for why we are more prone to infections like colds and flu when we are stressed. It can exacerbate the symptoms of diseases that have an autoimmune component such as lupus or rheumatoid arthritis.

Stress is associated with mental health problems, in particular anxiety and depression. Here the relationship is fairly clear: the negative thinking that causes stress also contributes to these mental health issues.

Countering these issues is EXERCISE which can reduce your physiological reaction to stress. It also strengthens the heart and increases blood supply to it, directly affecting your vulnerability to heart disease.

On an exercise side note – there appears to be some research that says even for people who exercise, but spend hours a day *sitting*, there is a greater health rise. It appears that it is associated with sitting or sedentary work. Standing or doing a little bit of exercise five minutes out of every hour may significantly help your health.

A contributor to the American College of Sports Medicine magazine, Robert Bragg, says:

"It has become clear that too much sitting is not the same as too little activity! Let me repeat that - too much sitting is NOT the same as too little activity. This is an important point not to be missed. For example it has been shown that sitting for as little as 1 hour can have detrimental health consequences. After 60 minutes your insulin sensitivity begins to decline (this is not a good thing since a decrease in sensitivity to insulin is one of the first steps towards diabetes. In addition it has also been observed that your blood lipid profiles (HDL, LDL cholesterol, triglycerides, etc.) take a turn for the worse as well!

(So forget about grabbing a big dinner with the double fudge volcano cake and then parking your backside in the chair!)

Now in this day and age of cross-fit and kettle-bell mania you probably think, hey I'm active, I jog my 30 minutes a day and do my pushups crunches I'm good. Right? – Wrong! As I stated above too much sitting is not the same as inactivity. This is not to say your workouts are of no value; exercise most certainly is beneficial to your health (and maybe even your job) but your (sitting) job can drag down your return-on-investment in the most insidious and innocent manner. Ask yourself just how often do you ride in your car or sit at your desk for more than an hour? (I recall seeing an officer issuing a ticket without getting out of his car! No joke!) In today's technologically advanced society you can do most of your work in the car, no need to get out.

It is well documented that the average American is now sitting at a "screen" for more than 4 hours a day!

The good news (if it is not already obvious) is ***stand*** *don't sit! Get off your behind (GOYB) and move for 5-10 minutes every hour. When you take a break don't go sit for coffee;* ***stand*** *for coffee! When you go to the bar, stand and talk to your "buds". Avoid the seated position for as long as you can.*

Stress and Performance

Remember the term eustress? We discussed how some individuals seem to thrive on certain types of stress or seemingly stressful calls. Think about yourself or dispatchers you know who really get into the "zone" or high gear during major events and how well they perform under fire. They seem to have better skills and increased dispatcher performance. This would be the effect of eustress.

To better understand your role and the knowledge, skills, duties and tasks that you will need to perform in doing your job, we'll start with the identified "knowledge" area of Stress Management and Critical Incident Stress Management.

Approaches to Managing Stress

There are three major approaches to managing stress:

- **Action-oriented**: In which we seek to confront the problem causing the stress and may involve changing the environment or the situation
- **Emotionally-oriented**: In which we do not have the power to change the situation, but we can manage stress by changing our interpretation of the situation and the way we feel about it or choose to view it
- **Acceptance-oriented**: Where something has happened over which we have no control and where our focus is on surviving the stress

In order to take the action-oriented approach, you have to have some control or power over the situation. We can use techniques that manage or overcome stressful situations, changing them to our advantage.

Emotionally-oriented stress management can be used when you do not have the power to change the situation. Emotionally-oriented approaches include changing the way you choose to look at something or the way you feel about it. We look a lot at this concept in Telecommunicator IV – when we talk about focusing on what you WANT rather than want you DON'T want. This approach to stress helps us adjust our perceptions of the situation or event.

For a situation where you have so little power over the event, all you can do is survive it and then an acceptance-oriented approach to stress management may be the way you choose to deal with the situation.

We've discussed the fundamentals of stress management and given you a few minutes to look over this workbook as it will apply in this course, but also as a future resource for you to use over the coming weeks and months. We will talk about other types of stress and critical incident stress later during the class, but for our first discussion here, we want you to think about positive stress that enhances performance versus negative stress that impedes performance or negatively impacts your life.

In addition, we want you to think about the different ways in which we can approach the stressors in our life so that we can manage stress in order to become more productive and happier. We hope to be able to give you some tools to help manage stress throughout your career

We offer a more in-depth 6 hour Stress Management component in our Telecommunicator II- Basic Law Enforcement and Fire Dispatcher course as well as a separate 6-8 hour Stress Management Course for Telecommunicators – based on the information that is in Telecommunicator II. Both of those courses will also offer information on Critical Incident Stress Management.

LIABILITY AWARENESS

PROFESSIONAL EXPECTATIONS

A telecommunicator must provide **every caller with the same level of service and courtesy *ON EVERY CALL, EVERY TIME*.**

MAINTAINING CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

Call Takers & Dispatchers must have the ability to maintain confidential information: Call Takers and dispatchers are responsible for releasing information at times. The agency must provide their personnel with the guidelines for each type of information that could be potentially released. An agency should have a clear policy on the release of confidential information and the consequences for its inappropriate release. **REQUESTS FOR ANONYMITY OR NON-DISCLOSURE SHOULD BE PROMINENTLY PLACED IN THE CALL**.

Likewise, each agency will have an expectation that information obtained during the course of work shall remain confidential unless the telecommunicator has clear guidelines for the release of such information. It is up to each *individual and his or her agency to have a clear understanding of the confidential requirements* for the public safety telecommunicator.

All users of the ACCESS system are required to complete a certification process. Part of that process is to review the conditions under which information obtained via this system may be released.

RCW 42.56 is the chapter that deals with public disclosure within the State of Washington. It states what types of information are disclosable and which are exempt. Some of the exemptions from disclosure, which may affect the telecommunicator, include:

- **RCW 42.56.240** -The caller's request for anonymity ***or*** if releasing the "information revealing the identity of witness to or victims of a crime or a person who files a complaint with an investigative, law enforcement, or penology agency is exempt if disclosure would endanger any person's life, physical safety, or property. If at the time a complaint is filed the complainant, victim or witness indicates a desire for disclosure or *non-disclosure* [anonymity], such desire shall govern".

Other types of information, which may be exempt from disclosure, include that personal information about an individual that could prove highly offensive to a reasonable person, could be construed to be an invasion of privacy. This may include personal information about a person such as a social security number, non-published telephone number, etc.

- **RCW 42.56.050 HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability Accountability Act, 1996)** – does not allow the release of information regarding a person's health or medical condition. HIPAA requirements may vary based on the configuration of the communications agency. The United States Department of Health and Human Services, however, outlines information on patient protections that include:

  The new privacy regulations ensure a national floor of privacy protections for patients by limiting the ways that health plans, pharmacies, hospitals and other covered entities can use patients' personal medical information. The regulations protect medical records and other individually identifiable health information, whether it is on paper, in computers or communicated orally. Key provisions of these new standards include:

  - **Access to Medical Records.** Patients generally should be able to see and obtain copies of their medical records and request corrections if they identify errors and mistakes. Health plans, doctors, hospitals, clinics, nursing homes and other covered

  entities generally should provide access to these records within 30 days and may charge patients for the cost of copying and sending the records.
  - **Notice of Privacy Practices.** Covered health plans, doctors and other health care providers must provide a notice to their patients how they may use personal medical information and their rights under the new privacy regulation. Doctors, hospitals and other direct-care providers generally will provide the notice on the patient's first visit following the April 14, 2003, compliance date and upon request. Patients generally will be asked to sign, initial or otherwise acknowledge that they received this notice.
  - **Limits on Use of Personal Medical Information.** The privacy rule sets limits on how health plans and covered providers *may use individually identifiable health information.* To promote the best quality care for patients, the rule does not restrict the ability of doctors, nurses and other providers to share information needed to treat their patients. In other situations, though, personal health information generally may not be used for purposes not related to health care, and covered entities may use or share only the minimum amount of protected information needed for a particular purpose. In addition, patients would have to sign a specific authorization before a covered entity could release their medical information to a life insurer, a bank, a marketing firm or another outside business for purposes not related to their health care.
  - **Stronger State Laws.** The new federal privacy standards do not affect state laws that provide additional privacy protections for patients. The confidentiality protections are cumulative; the privacy rule will set a national "floor" of privacy standards that protect all Americans, and any state law providing additional protections would continue to apply. When a state law requires a certain disclosure -- such as reporting an infectious disease outbreak to the public health authorities -- the federal privacy regulations would not preempt the state law.
  - **Confidential Communications.** Under the privacy rule, patients can request that their doctors, health plans and other covered entities take reasonable steps to ensure that their communications with the patient are confidential. For example, a patient could ask a doctor to call his or her office rather than home, and the doctor's office should comply with that request if it can be reasonably accommodated.

Consider your use of social media such as Facebook, Twitter or My Space as well as email or phone texting. Are you discussing confidential information or calls from your workplace outside of the workplace?

- Does your agency have a social media policy?
- If you are not allowed to discuss calls that come in at work, does that apply to posting the information in other ways?
- There have been recent cases of telecommunicator terminations based on posting information on social media sites.

AVOID STATEMENTS THAT CAN MISLEAD THE CALLER

This area is of particular note for telecommunicators. ***It is imperative that you understand your agency policy on statements you make to a caller, either to reassure them or to provide them information about what to expect.***

If the telecommunicator makes a promise or gives an express assurance to a caller that is false or goes unfulfilled, not only may that telecommunicator be subject to disciplinary action by their employer, the telecommunicator's employer may be sued and required to pay damages to the caller. A promise or assurance may lead the caller to believe a certain course of action will follow. For example, telling the caller "we'll be right there", when, in fact, *you* have no way to guarantee that statement. That may give the caller a false sense of security and cause them to avoid taking other necessary steps to deal with their emergency. Similarly, telling a caller that a specific agency has been notified of the caller's emergency ***even if it has***, may create liability for the telecommunicator's employer. **You must clarify with your agency what can or cannot be said to a caller, particularly if you are attempting to reassure or inform them of a course of action you believe, truthfully, has been taken, i.e., appropriate assistance has been dispatched.**

ACCOUNTABILITY AND LEGAL RESPONSIBILITY

By definition, telecommunicators respond to people who are experiencing what may be the most traumatic event of their life. The guidelines and protocols shared during this training program are designed and intended to provide you with the best practices for responding to callers. As professionals, telecommunicators are expected to comply with the rules, guidelines and protocols shared in this training program and by the agency that employs the telecommunicator. Because the nature of the job necessarily requires telecommunicators to come into contact with members of the public who are in crisis, there will be times when in the calm that follows the emergency, the actions and judgment of the telecommunicator will be subject to review. This may arise as part of a review of your performance by a supervisor in your agency. In addition, there may be times over the course of your career when your decisions and actions become the subject of a lawsuit.

> **JUST BECAUSE A LAWSUIT HAS BEEN FILED DOES NOT NECESSARILY MEAN YOU DID ANYTHING WRONG.**

Unfortunately, people sometimes file lawsuits that have little or no merit. Still, if a lawsuit is filed that concerns some aspect of how you performed your job as a telecommunicator, you should inform your supervisor immediately. If the subject of the lawsuit concerns actions you took in good faith in the course of your employment your employer may provide you with legal representation. If a lawsuit is filed and you are named as a defendant you should speak with your supervisor about whether this option is available to you.

A lawsuit is commenced by filing legal documents called a Summons and Complaint. The Summons notifies the defendant of the title of the lawsuit, the court where it has been brought, and information about how quickly you must respond. The Complaint is the document that describes why the lawsuit has been filed. It explains, in very general terms, the identity of the plaintiff and defendants, the plaintiff's description of the incident, and what the plaintiff seeks (usually money damages) in the lawsuit. Again, if a telecommunicator is ever served with a Summons and Complaint that challenges any aspect of their job performance, **that person should immediately inform his/her supervisor**.

During the course of the litigation process the telecommunicator may be asked to help answer questions about their education, training, background, and the incident that is the subject of the lawsuit. The exchange of this type of information occurs in virtually every civil lawsuit filed. The telecommunicator's attorney can provide additional details about this and other aspects of the litigation.

> **Remember, direct all questions or concerns about the lawsuit or the incident that is the subject of the lawsuit to your supervisor or agency head, who will contact your agency legal representation.**

Can my actions result in my employer being sued?

Yes. Generally, if the telecommunicator makes a promise or gives an express assurance to a caller that is false or goes unfulfilled, not only may that telecommunicator be subject to disciplinary action by their employer, the telecommunicator's employer may be sued and have to pay damages to the caller.

Promises and express assurances may lead the caller to believe a certain course of action will follow.

Example:	Telling the caller "we'll be right there", when, in fact, *you* have no way to guarantee that statement may give the caller a false sense of security and cause the caller to avoid taking other necessary steps to deal with their emergency.
Example:	Telling a caller that a specific agency has been notified of the caller's emergency **even when it has**, may create liability for the telecommunicator's employer. ***YOU MUST clarify with your agency what you can or cannot say to a caller that may affect a caller's expectation of what will happen with the call.***

BE AWARE OF THE IMPORTANT ROLE YOU SERVE IN THE DELIVERY OF EMERGENCY SERVICES *ON EVERY CALL, EVERY TIME*

What steps should I take to make sure the public is best served?

Follow Agency Guidelines and Protocols

- Perform your duties at an adequate level
- Brief oncoming personnel/shift change
- DO NOT take over until you have been adequately briefed
- Periodically review agency policies and procedures
- Use EMD guidelines and protocols on every medical call
- Know how to efficiently and effectively take a TTY call

Treat Every Call Seriously and Respond Appropriately

- Respond - When in doubt, send someone out
- DO NOT prejudge the caller or situation
- DO NOT **assume** facts about which you are not clear. Ask for clarification
- DO NOT make promissory statements

Act as a Reasonable Person

- DO NOT give out legal advice
- Ask if you do not know the answer to a question
- Base your actions on policy or procedures and the intent of those policies/procedures
- Know the responsibilities and authority of your position and DO NOT overextend the scope of your responsibilities
- Become familiar with backup systems for documentation, such as manual incident forms, back up telephone, radio, equipment and procedures, etc.

Document

- Keep accurate records of information given to you. Document correct "times" in the call, either manually or with CAD. DO NOT rely on memory

- Remember that telephones, mobile data, and radio frequencies are recorded as a form of documentation
- DO NOT discuss or send sensitive information over them. Keep in mind that CAD terminal-to-terminal messages can be retrieved. In addition, e-mail is not "private". This information may be subject to public disclosure. DO NOT communicate anything you would not want played or read in court
- Report and document any equipment problem or malfunction and document who or where you reported it (signal malfunction, stop signs down, hydrants out of service, etc.)
- Appropriately update calls and responders with pertinent new information

POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS SITUATIONS

An important question to ask the caller, "Is it safe for you to stay on the phone with me?"

When faced with questions relating to caller safety, the Call Taker must be concerned with the safety of the caller (or others at the scene) and responders. In cases where a caller has armed him or herself for the purpose of self-protection, responders must have that information relayed to them. Likewise, if the caller asks you if they should defend themselves, your best course of action, based on your departmental policy, may be to tell them, "You must decide what you have to do to protect yourself". This is not meant to preclude the Call Taker from advising a caller to put down a weapon when responders are on the scene and asking that he or she do so.

If a caller should ask you "Should I leave the house", the best course of action may be to leave that decision to the caller, based on the circumstances and what the caller knows about the situation. ***The key is to know your policy and communicate with responders***. "Do what you feel is safe for you", while updating responders, gives the decision back to the caller.

BEHAVIORS TO AVOID:

Disobedience of the Rules - Willfully, knowingly or intentionally disregarding your - Standard Operating Procedures or Guidelines (SOPs/ SOGs), department policies, etc. or inadvertently forgetting (keep current on policies & procedures)

- **Follow EMD guidelines or protocols that are in place**
- **Appropriately prioritize**

- Distractions (Not hearing what the caller is saying, missing vital information, transposing numbers – failing to double check work for accuracy, etc.)
- Confusing sound-alike addresses or failing to have caller reconfirm or verify information
- Inattention to work
- Missing radio transmissions
- Failing to verify information that was not clear or understood

Exercising Poor Judgment

- Not asking the appropriate questions
- Making assumptions based on a preconceived idea, bias or prejudice
- Guessing at information or failing to clarify
- Failing to recall or trace incomplete or hang up 9-1-1 calls
- Failing to query silent 9-1-1 for TTY users
- Misusing confidential data

Taking Chances

- Acknowledging a transmission without being sure of the content
- Leaving a position unattended
- Demanding a caller to stay on line without asking if it is safe for them to do so
- Adopting a "Who is going to know?" attitude

Horseplay

- Goofing off/joking on the phone or over the radio
- Teasing co-worker while they are on phone or radio
- Clearing someone's CAD screen mid-call or mid-dispatch
- Too much background noise in the center – distracting employees, callers or responders

Unprofessional Attitude or Conduct

- Hostile tone of voice
- Arguing with callers, responders, or co-workers in a manner which is distracting or counter productive
- Failing to handle requests for service appropriately ("What can they do, fire me?" or "That's not my job.")

Notes:

A BASIC OVERVIEW OF THE INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM

Another area of knowledge that we will briefly cover here is the basic command structure of the Incident Command System) ICS). Most of you will have taken or will be taking an in-classroom or on-line course dealing with ICS and the National Incident Management System (NIMS). ICS and NIMS are covered in depth in Telecommunicator II. This is intended as a brief introduction to the system.

Incident Command System

ICS DEFINED

The Incident Command (or Management) System is the method used to effectively manage resources and personnel during an incident.

ICS was developed after the wildfires that devastated parts of California in the 1970's. It was clear a better method of managing these large events was needed and the Incident Command System is the result of those efforts.

The Incident Command System (ICS) is based upon business management principles:

1. **Planning**
2. **Directing**
3. **Organizing**
4. **Coordinating**
5. **Communicating**
6. **Delegating**
7. **Evaluating**

As such, ICS is recognized as the foundation for an all-risk emergency response. This includes law enforcement, fire services, and EMS.

ICS is a management system that facilitates organizing and using the following resources:

- ✓ **Personnel – responders, dispatchers, Call Takers, others**
- ✓ **Facilities – command post, staging, base, rehab, etc.**
- ✓ **Equipment – apparatus, equipment, etc.**
- ✓ **Communications – radio frequencies, telephones, faxes, documentation**

LAWS AND STANDARDS OF ICS

Federal laws *require* an ICS for ***hazardous materials incidents*** as stipulated by the:

- Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act of 1986 (SARA)
- Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

Additionally, the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) requires ICS.

The National Curriculum Advisory Committee recommended ICS as an all-risk, all-agency system. In 1987, the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) endorsed ICS.

In Washington State, it is required to use ICS on all HazMat incidents as well as Search and Rescue responses.

> **RCW 43.43.972 -** Law enforcement mobilization — Local law enforcement request for mobilization — State law enforcement resource coordinator — Mobilization response.

RCW 38.52.400 - Search and rescue activities — Powers and duties of local officials.
(1) The chief law enforcement officer of each political subdivision shall be responsible for local search and rescue activities. Operation of search and rescue activities shall be in accordance with state and local operations plans adopted by the elected governing body of each local political subdivision. These state and local plans must specify the use of the incident command system for multiagency or multijurisdictional search and rescue operations. The local emergency management director shall notify the department of all search and rescue missions.

WAC 468-200-120 – requires SAR workers to possess knowledge of ICS

ICS CONCEPTS, ELEMENTS AND PRINCIPLES

There are eight primary elements of ICS. They are:

1. **Common *terminology***
2. **Modular *organization***
3. **Integrated *communications***
4. **Use of a *unified command* structure**
5. **Consolidated *action plans***
6. **A manageable *span of control***
7. **Designated incident *facilities***
8. **Comprehensive *resource management***

Common Terminology

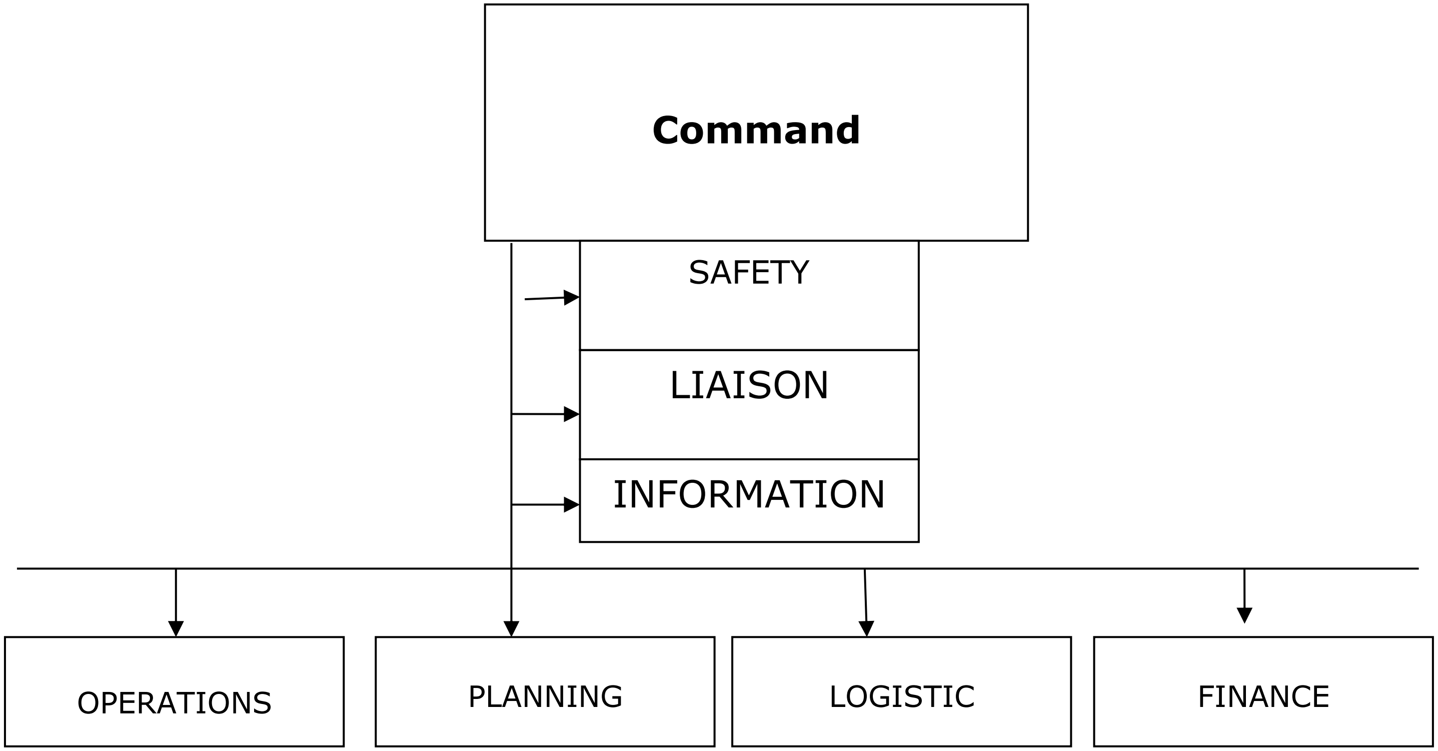
In ICS, the use of common terminology is critical. Major organizational functions and units are *pre-designated*. Common names are established for all personnel, equipment, and facilities and around the incident. Plain language is advocated rather than "10" or other radio traffic codes. Everyone involved in the incident is using the same terms so there is common understanding among the participants.

Modular Organization

ICS is a system that may expand or contract as the needs of an event change. It is flexible. Not all positions are nor should be filled for all incidents. The need to have an effective *span of control* may dictate how many command or general staff positions are filled. If a position is *not* filled, the Incident Commander is responsible for that function.

The **five functional areas** that *may* be implemented as needed are:

1. **Incident Commander (or "Command")**
   a. **Under the commander are the public information officer, liaison officer, and safety officer, if needed**
2. **Operations Section**
3. **Planning Section**
4. **Logistics Section**
5. **Finance Section**


Command
SAFETY
LIAISON
INFORMATION
OPERATIONS
PLANNING
LOGISTIC
FINANCE

Integrated Communications

A common communications plan and standard operating procedures (SOPs) or guidelines (SOGs) provide a:

- **Faster response**
- **Better coordinated response**

Unified Command

Unified command (NOT TO BE CONFUSED WITH "UNITY OF COMMAND Unity of Command means every person reports to ONE individual) allows principal players (responding agencies) to:

- **Establish common goals and objectives** – *what* is the goal?
- **Develop a *SINGLE* plan** – *how* is the goal achieved?
- **Share resources** – *what* are they and *how* can they best be utilized?
- **Establish specific responsibilities** - *who* is the person responsible for specific or individual tasks?

Unified command can be used for:

- Single-jurisdiction, multiple-agency incidents
- Multiple-jurisdiction incidents
- When more than one individual shares overall management responsibility

Consolidated Action Plan

This is the plan that outlines what the goal is for the incident and how the goal will be accomplished. Each agency will have a part in developing the consolidated action plan.

These plans may be oral or written.

- Written plans are required when multiple agencies are involved
- Action plans cover:
    - Goals
    - Objectives
    - Support activities
    -

Command Function

The Command function (Incident Commander):

- Exerts overall on-scene management of the incident and is responsible for:
    - The action plan to control the incident
    - The organization structure
    - Handles the duties of all command staff or general staff positions that are unassigned

Command Staff

Command staff is needed at large-scale or complex incidents:

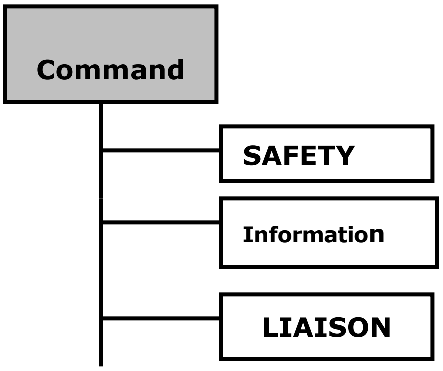
If the IC is unable to handle the functions of **Safety Officer, Liaison Officer**, and **Information Officer, then the Incident Command shall establish the Command Staff.**

The Command Staff consist of:

- **Safety Officer**: Who is responsible for the safety of the personnel at the incident.
- **The Public Information Officer:** is responsible for all media releases, in coordination with the Incident Commander. ***As known as the PIO.***

- **Liaison Officer**: is responsible for coordinating the multi agencies that may be involved during the incident.

The Command Staff



The Safety Officer:

- Ensures personnel observe safety procedures and safe practices
- Identifies unsafe or hazardous conditions that may exist or develop
- Develops measures to protect the safety of personnel
- Takes immediate action to stop or prevent unsafe acts
- The Safety Officer has the authority to take immediate action as necessary to prevent injury

The Liaison Officer:

- Is the point of contact for assisting and/or coordinating with agencies
- Provides lines of authority, responsibility, and communication

The Information Officer:

- Provides a valuable interface with the media to disseminate accurate, timely, and consistent information

Functional Areas in the General Staff:

The functional or general areas of the command structure are:

Operations Section Chief:
- Manages tactical operations
- Coordinates operations

Planning Section Chief:
Planning responsibilities include information:

- Collection
- Evaluation
- Dissemination
- Use for incident development and resource status

Logistics Section Chief:

Is responsible for locating, organizing, and providing facilities, services, and materials for the incident. Services may include providing for *responder*

- **Communications**
- **Medical Care**
- **Food**

Finance and Administration Section Chief:

Finance is responsible for:

- Tracking all costs and financial considerations surrounding the incident
- Monitoring recording of information and costs for potential reimbursements at a later time

ICS and the Call Taker

If the telecommunicator is acting as both a Call Taker and a dispatcher, it is clear that there is a need to know and understand the basic principles of Incident Command. As a dispatcher, you may be dealing with this structure during fire responses as well as law enforcement incidents. It will be important for you to know whom each of the general or command staff persons are, as requests are made of you.

In addition, for those telecommunicators who are filling a Call Taker position will need to be able to respond to requests from the field. These may be received by telephone. Request from the field should be *thoroughly documented* in the call, including who made the request, the details of the request, and how the request was handled.

Documentation is extremely important after the event. It is essential that information or requests received from incident responders be accurately recorded, noting the time and disposition of the request or notification. An example would be if a request was received from the dispatcher or commander in the field to make "staff notifications", the Call Taker notes the time of the request and document the time and whether or not a staff member could be notified. This information is documented in the call. Requests may be made to notify the Red Cross or other organizations whose services are needed during the event. This information, too, is clearly documented in the call, including, *who* was notified and *when*.

Call Takers may be asked to relay information about the incident to other responders. It is essential to know the terms and information about such things as:

- Staging
- Command Post
- Frequency or talk group assignment

In addition to having an understanding of how the Incident Command System works in the field, the telecommunicator should understand how ICS could work within the Communications Center. While the "communications" function is often listed under the "Logistics" functional area of the incident, the Communications Center may also have in place a plan to operate in a modified ICS structure during a major event. An example would be if an agency with multiple telecommunications staff on duty was involved in a major incident, the staff may move into a "major incident" mode. Perhaps a supervisor would designate specific duties to other staff members, while maintaining an adequate "span of control". If the incident grew or there was more staff on duty than could be effectively managed by one individual, other person within the center could be assigned "functional" areas of responsibility.

Examples could be:

- Will additional staff be needed?
- Who will make the staff call-ins?
- Do we need to dedicate a person to make out-going calls, notifications, etc.?
- Do we need to assign back-up dispatchers to assist the dispatcher(s) handling a major incident?
- How can we make the operation of the center more effective and efficient during this event?

GROUP OR TEAM DYNAMICS

Another area identified by the Call Taker panels, was the need for Call Takers to have knowledge of group or team dynamics.

As a new person at an agency, it is imperative that you become a functioning member of a team or work group. The information below is provided to assist telecommunicators in broadening their understanding of the processes that take place within a team or work group.

A Brief Overview of Group and Team Dynamics

The Public Safety Team

Public Safety Call Takers are part of several teams. Individually, they may be part of a team or group that is specific to a shift. Unless they work in a center where they are the only person on duty within the center, chances are they are part of a shift.

They are also part of the larger agency team. Call Takers have a specific role to play within their agencies. They may be part of a stand-alone agency that provides public safety communications services for multiple agencies. Alternately, they may be employed by one public safety agency, i.e., sheriff's office, police department, or fire department. Call Takers are part of the agency team.

Call Takers are also part of the larger public safety team comprised of law enforcement, fire, and EMS. The Call Taker and Dispatcher contribute to the makeup of this greater team which works to provide public safety services to a community.

As a member of several teams, it is important for persons new to the agency (and thus, the team) to understand some of the basic principles of group or team dynamics.

Group/Team Dynamics

Groups go through several stages of development. In 1965 Bruce W. Tuckman, an educational psychologist now with the University of Ohio proposed a model that described the phases that are necessary for a group to go through in order to become effective.

FORMING

In the first stages of team building or group dynamics, comes the ***FORMING*** stage.

This stage is where a new group comes together (or one or more new persons are added to an existing group) and each individual's behavior is motivated by their need to be accepted by others in the group. This can be a "honeymoon" period identified by avoidance of conflict or controversy.

The group may consist of a new work shift that sees some members leave and other new ones arrive. The group learns about the shift's opportunities and challenges and determines the general flow of work and requirements of the shift.

Team members tend to work and behave independently. Often, they have no formal process for establishing shift or team goals or objectives. Most individuals are on their best behavior, but self-focused.

This is where members of the team get to know one another. This is also where team members watch to see how other members respond to work load, stress, and each other.

STORMING

The next stage that the group will enter is the ***STORMING*** stage.

In this stage the group individual's ideas compete for consideration. The group decides on the formal or informal leader or leadership style preference. Team members are more comfortable confronting each other's ideas or perspectives. This stage is where initial conflict arises and through effective interpersonal skills, this is the stage where the team may experience some stressful interactions.

This is a NECESSARY stage for the group to work through in order to come together as an effective and cohesive team. This is also the stage where teams get stuck and never progress to the other phases.

The group will be working more toward an understanding of individual roles and responsibilities. Because conflict can arise, some of the members may attempt to avoid confronting issues, thereby holding the group progress back.

Supervisors, who intervene at this stage with a "no conflict" message, may further delay the team's progress into the next phase of development. This stage is critical for the formation of an effective team.

NORMING

In this stage, team members understand the "rules of engagement", individual tasks and responsibilities and are generally in agreement. Effective group members practice tolerance and patience and exhibit supportive behaviors. This is a difficult stage to achieve. Every team member must begin to understand other members points of view and needs, and generally what the team will or will not accept or tolerate. This is a critical phase in order for a highly effective and successful team to be able to move into the next phase.

The norming phase may be where some groups remain. For various reasons, they may never reach the higher "performing" stage

PERFORMING

This is the stage good teams work to achieve. Unfortunately, this phase is not reached by all groups or teams. It is characterized by member's being able to work interdependently and flexibly. This group operates effectively as a unit finding ways to get the job done effectively without inappropriate behaviors and conflict. This group tends to need minimal supervision. This stage is typified by team members' acceptance of each other and each other's strengths and weaknesses.

Performing teams may revert back to earlier stages. Changes occur in the workplace or among team members that may require the group to revert back to earlier phases.

ADJOURNING

This phase occurs when the group's goals are accomplished or there is a disengagement of members or duties. In a communications center, this may occur when new shift bids are put in place and the team breaks up as members go to different shifts, etc.

This phase may include a sense of loss by the group when a highly effective team breaks up.

The new team now goes back to the *forming* stage and begins again.

Understanding Informal Group Dynamics

Informal groups have a number of things in common:

- Informal groups may serve as a counter to the function of the organization
    - The informal group may attempt to counteract demands from agency management by finding ways to adopt less demanding norms or sabotage management's imposed standards.
    - Informal groups may emerge that work to improve their shift's or agency's performance.
- Informal groups have their own communications network
    - Group members have a reasonability to make sure that the informal communications information is correct.
    - There may be an individual who is expected to obtain and provide updated information to the group.
- Informal leaders may emerge
    - Groups my "elect" the informal leader or "un-elect" them
    - Having an informal group leader that works well with the supervisor or manager may create a better relationship between the group and agency administration.
- Informal groups serve a function
    - Provide a sense of belonging
    - Provide an identity and self-esteem
    - Provide stress reduction
    - May help create a more cohesive team
- Informal groups can be the best or worst of an organization
    - Informal groups or dysfunctional teams may damage the reputation of the organization as well as its members.
    - Informal groups can be high performing teams that set the bar for the organization and inspire others within the agency to higher achievement.

A telecommunicator new to an organization must find a way to navigate through the waters of group and team dynamics. They are new to the organization as well as the shift, group or team and as such want to fit in. It will help to understand that groups go through a process that has stages or phases that help move them toward becoming a cohesive and productive work group.

ACTIVE LISTENING AND INTERVIEWING SKILLS:
ON EVERY CALL, EVERY TIME

In addition to the very important call interviewing skill, Call Takers should be aware of the equally important Active Listening Skills.

This job is mostly verbal communication between the public or the responder and you. Also called Active Listening, it is an *essential* skill. You must listen for the meaning as well as their tone of voice and background noise. The two types of listening skills required are:

CONTENT: *What* the caller is actually saying

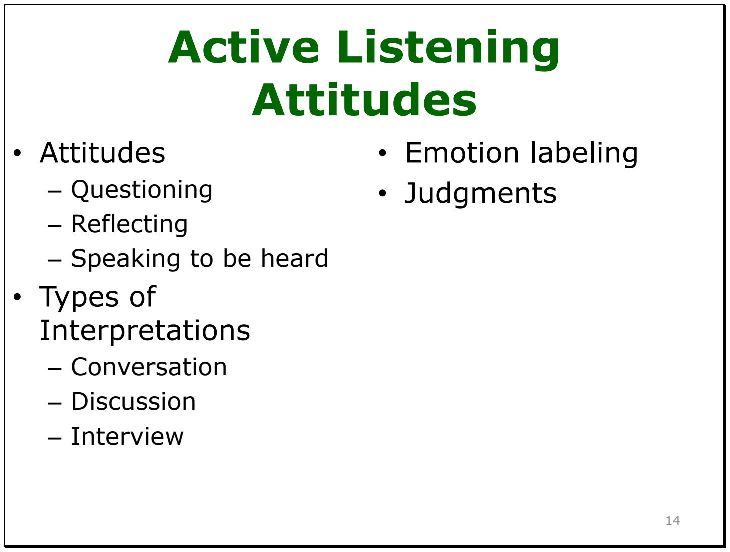
CONTEXT: The specific meaning of a statement when all of the circumstances are considered. The overall *implied* meaning. This may include background noise, tone of voice and other clues about a situation.

Active listening is a communication skill that is vitally important to the Call Taker. It is a foundation skill upon which many other call receiving skills are built. The purpose of active listening is to improve understanding between all parties in the communication. To actively listen requires the Call Taker to *attentively* "hear" what the caller is saying and clarify any underlying meaning. Active listening skills minimize misunderstanding, redundant questions and provide improved customer relations.

Active listening is a method of listening and responding to another person in a way that improves mutual understanding.

The *Study Guides and Strategies* website (http://www.studygs.net/listening.htm) suggests the following strategies to assist you to prepare to actively listen:

- Focus your attention on the subject. ***Stop non-relevant activities beforehand to orient yourself to the speaker or the topic***
- Review mentally what you already know about the subject
    - Example: domestic violence calls, what are some lethality factors to watch or "listen" for?
- *Avoid distractions*
    - Don't let the fact you may need to formulate another question take your attention off the response to a previous question
- *Acknowledge any emotional state*
    - Control your own emotions
    - Listen for emotions in the speaker
- Set aside prejudices and opinions
- Be other-directed – *focus on the person speaking*
- Be aware and involved
    - After asking a question focus on the response



Active Listening Attitudes

- Attitudes
    - Questioning
    - Reflecting
    - Speaking to be heard
- Types of Interpretations
    - Conversation
    - Discussion
    - Interview
- Emotion labeling
- Judgments

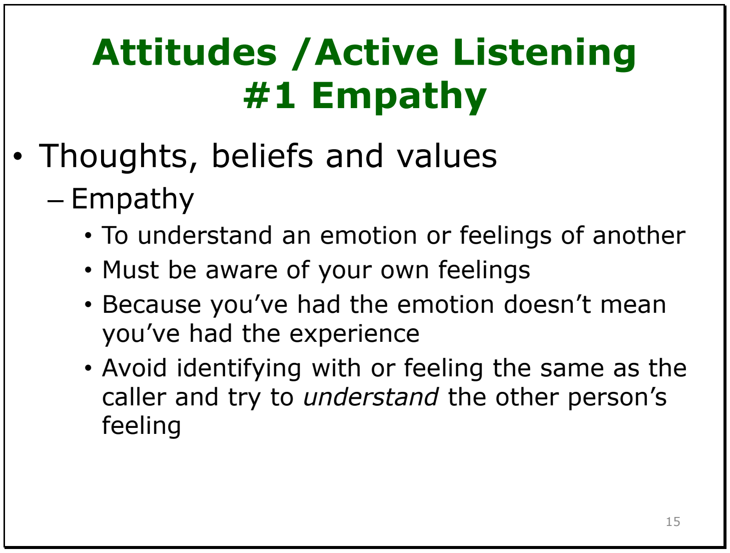
In his book *Active Communication*, author Matthew Westra makes a number of important points that can be tools in the toolbox of Public Safety Call Takers.

Attitudes (for more effective Active Listening)

"Attitudes" are collections of thoughts and beliefs that build on a person's philosophy of human nature and can be developed or modified. Because attitudes guide people's behavior and using the skills of active communication is one type of behavior, it is important to examine our attitudes".

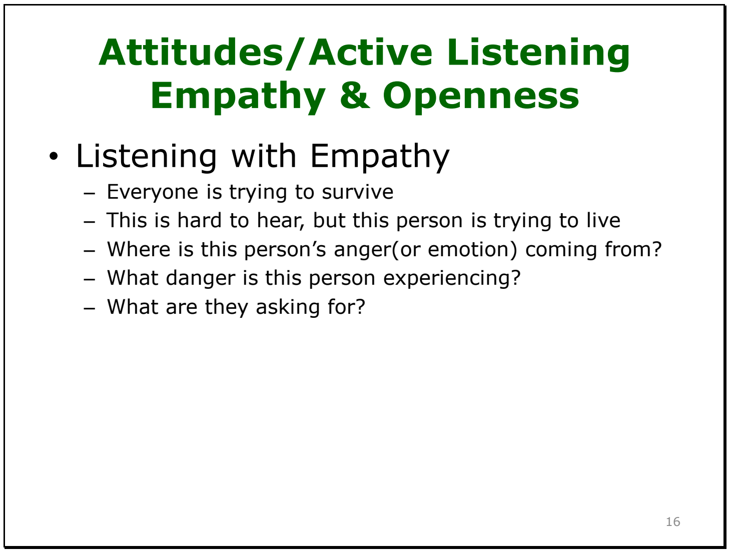
We will look at 6 attitudes to help you improve your Active Listening Skills. They are:

- Empathy
- Be authentic
- Postpone interpretations
- Suspend judgment
- Stay with the speaker (focus)
- Patience



Attitudes /Active Listening
#1 Empathy

- Thoughts, beliefs and values
  - Empathy
    - To understand an emotion or feelings of another
    - Must be aware of your own feelings
    - Because you've had the emotion doesn't mean you've had the experience
    - Avoid identifying with or feeling the same as the caller and try to *understand* the other person's feeling



Attitudes/Active Listening
Empathy & Openness

- Listening with Empathy
  - Everyone is trying to survive
  - This is hard to hear, but this person is trying to live
  - Where is this person's anger(or emotion) coming from?
  - What danger is this person experiencing?
  - What are they asking for?

Listening with Empathy

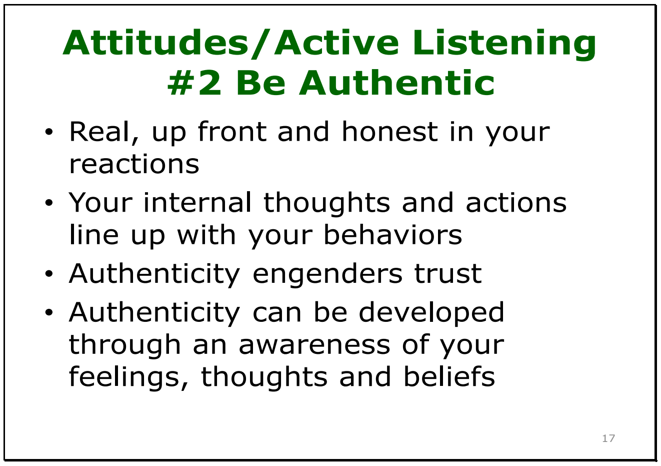
You will see that "empathy" is listed in two areas of our Occupational Analysis document you were given in class. It is under "Traits" (Empathetic/Respectful) and listed under Band A of our Duties under the Task heading of "Demonstrate Clear Effective Communication".

In their book, *Messages the Communication Skills Book* (3rd Ed.) Drs. Matthew McKay, Martha Davis and co-author Patrick Fanning state, "There is only one requirement for listening with empathy:

simply know that everyone is trying to survive. You don't have to like everyone or agree with everyone, but recognize that you do share the same struggles".

- "Listening with empathy means saying, "this is hard to hear, but it's another human being trying to live."

- "If you find listening with empathy difficult, ask the questions:
    - Where is this person's anger (or other emotion) coming from? What need does it fulfill?
    - What danger is this person experiencing
    - What is he or she asking for?"



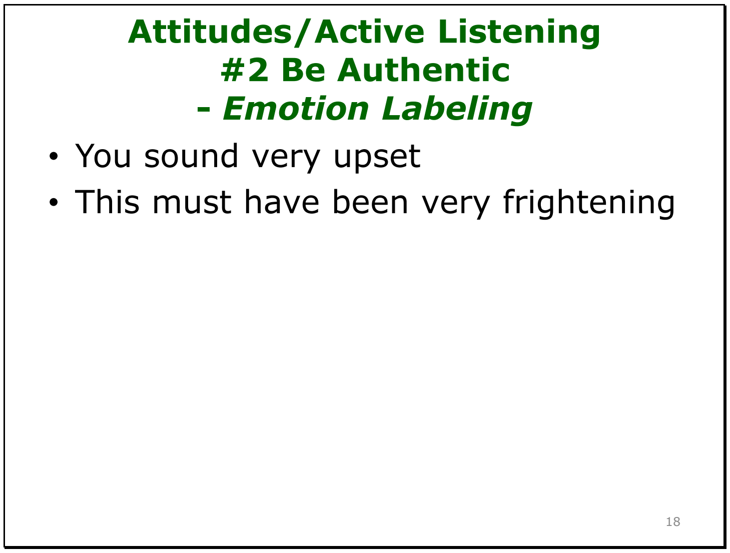
Attitudes/Active Listening
#2 Be Authentic

- Real, up front and honest in your reactions
- Your internal thoughts and actions line up with your behaviors
- Authenticity engenders trust
- Authenticity can be developed through an awareness of your feelings, thoughts and beliefs

17

Be Authentic

When dealing with a caller, be aware of the fact that if your thoughts and beliefs don't line up with your actions and behaviors (the way in which you ask questions, the tone of voice you use, the use of empathetic or non-empathetic responses), you may be perceived as inauthentic or false.



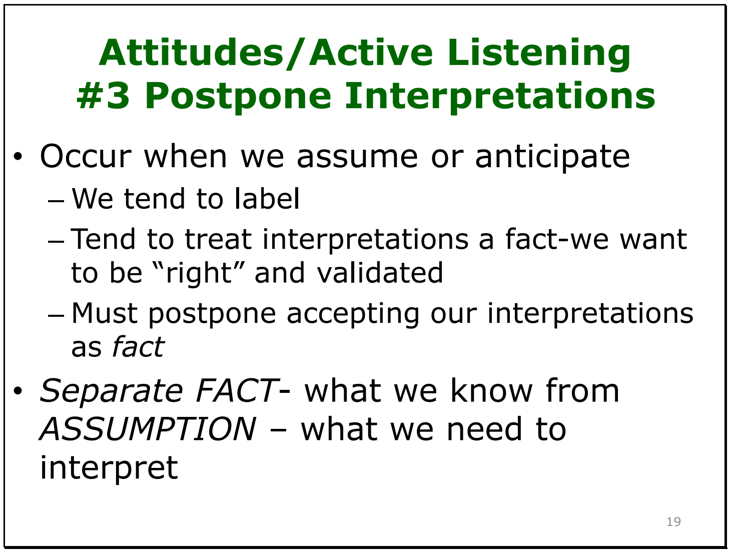
Attitudes/Active Listening
#2 Be Authentic
- *Emotion Labeling*

- You sound very upset
- This must have been very frightening

One technique we will talk about later is "emotion-labeling". Examples of emotion labeling are:

- You sound very frightened…
- You sound very upset…
- This must have been very frustrating…

Also be aware that when you attempt to label others' emotions, you often have only minimal clues about that person's true emotional state. Think about people who have called in serious crimes or events, who sounded unemotional or unnaturally calm. Using emotion-labeling allows you to check to see if your guess is correct, but we aware you may not always get it right.



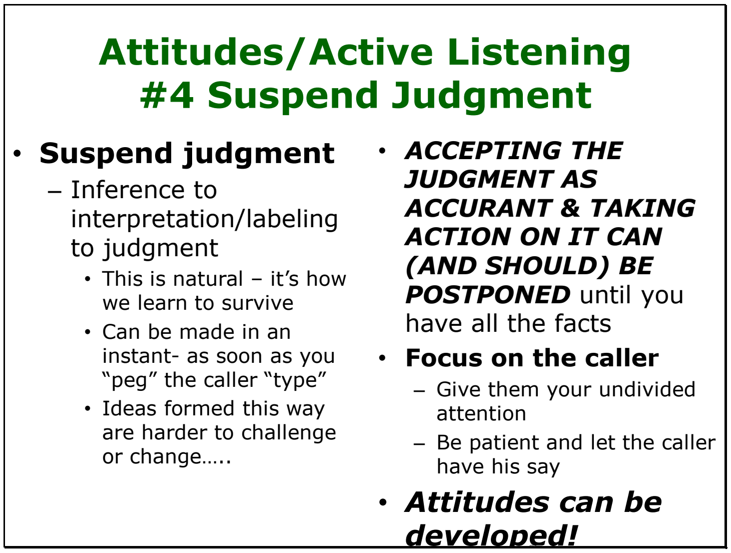
Attitudes/Active Listening
#3 Postpone Interpretations

- Occur when we assume or anticipate
  - We tend to label
  - Tend to treat interpretations a fact-we want to be “right” and validated
  - Must postpone accepting our interpretations as *fact*
- *Separate FACT*- what we know from *ASSUMPTION* – what we need to interpret

Postpone Interpretations

Interpretations:

- Occur when we assume or anticipate
- We tend to label
- We tend to treat interpretations as fact, we want to be right and have our interpretation validated
- ***Unless we can postpone accepting our interpretations as fact, we have a tendency to respond to the person or situation as though it fits the label we’ve put on them/it.***
- Separate **fact-** what we know from **assumption** – what we need to interpret. Be aware of the difference between the two



Attitudes/Active Listening
#4 Suspend Judgment

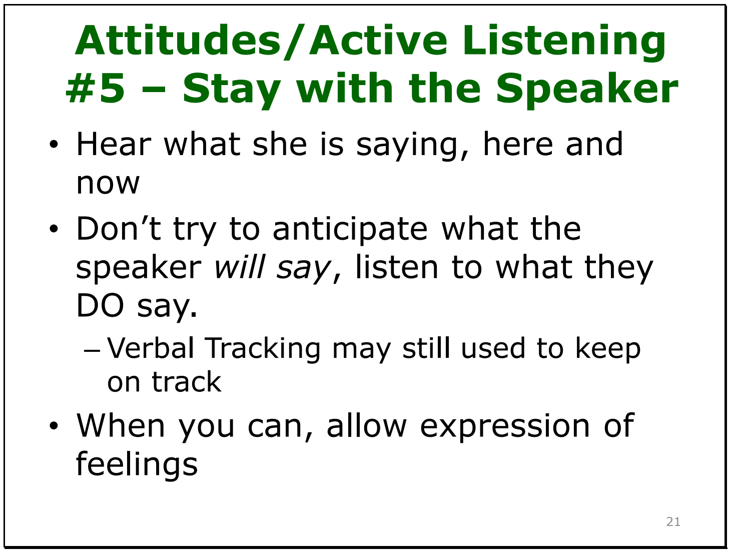
- **Suspend judgment**
  - Inference to interpretation/labeling to judgment
    - This is natural – it's how we learn to survive
    - Can be made in an instant- as soon as you "peg" the caller "type"
    - Ideas formed this way are harder to challenge or change…..
- ***ACCEPTING THE JUDGMENT AS ACCURANT & TAKING ACTION ON IT CAN (AND SHOULD) BE POSTPONED*** until you have all the facts
- **Focus on the caller**
  - Give them your undivided attention
  - Be patient and let the caller have his say
- ***Attitudes can be developed!***

Suspend Judgment

Judgment

Suspending judgment:

- ***Process builds from inference (you infer something based on what the caller says), to interpretation (you label the caller or event), to judgment. Ideas formed in each stage become progressively harder to challenge or change.***
- Making judgments is natural
- This is how we learn to survive
- A JUDGMENT CAN BE MADE AT AN INSTANT WHERE YOU BEGIN TO RECEIVE INFORMATION OR TALK TO A CALLER. *ACCEPTING THE JUDGMENT AS ACCURATE AND TAKING ACTION ON IT CAN BE (and should be) POSTPONED* until you can make a determination on facts and not bias.
- Focus on the caller – give the caller your undivided attention
- Patience – give the caller time to tell you what they have to say

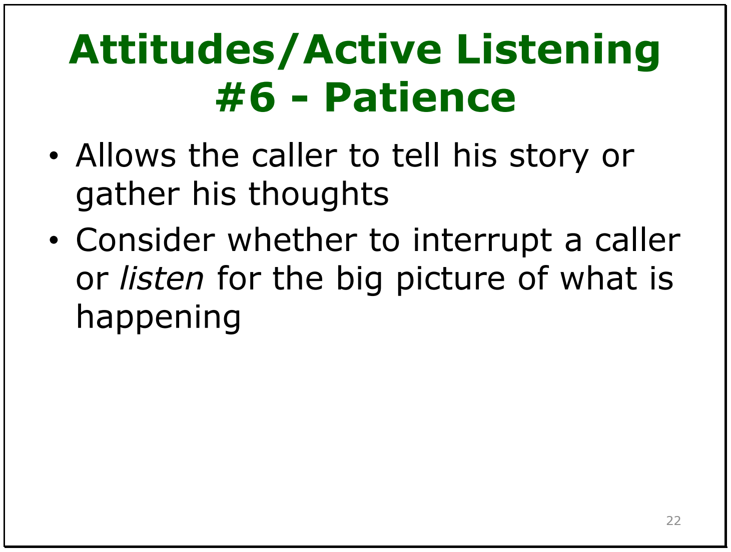


Attitudes/Active Listening #5 – Stay with the Speaker

- Hear what she is saying, here and now
- Don’t try to anticipate what the speaker *will say*, listen to what they DO say.
  - Verbal Tracking may still used to keep on track
- When you can, allow expression of feelings

Stay With the Speaker

Staying with the speaker simply means **to focus on what the speaker is saying in the present** and not trying to anticipate what she will say. We may miss vital information if we are attempting to focus on our next question, our next call, or other mental distractions. Active listening requires a focus on the speaker in the here and now.

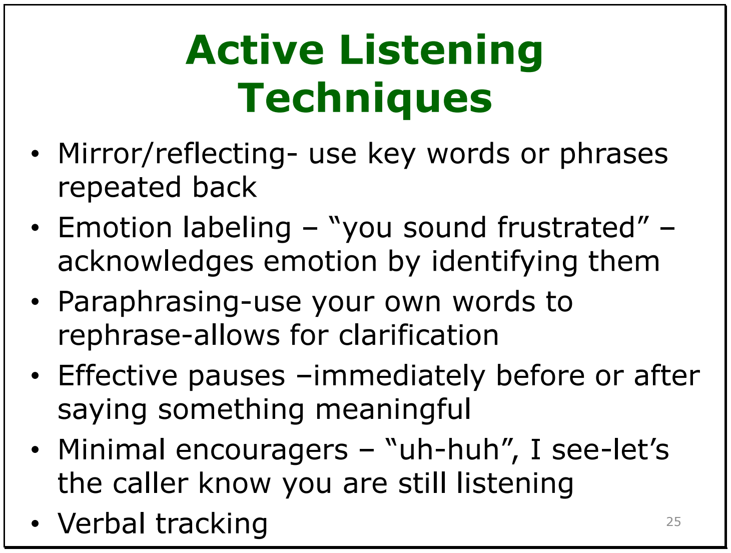


Attitudes/Active Listening #6 - Patience

- Allows the caller to tell his story or gather his thoughts
- Consider whether to interrupt a caller or *listen* for the big picture of what is happening

Patience

Attitudes can be developed with commitment.



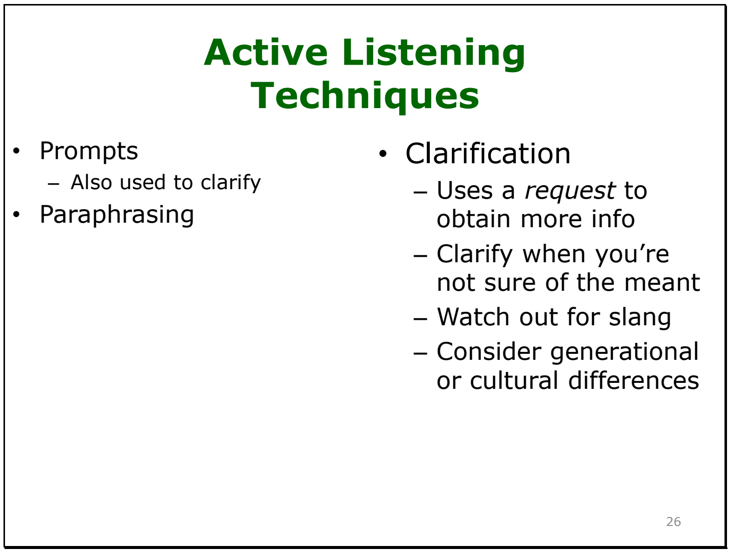
Active Listening Techniques

- Mirror/reflecting- use key words or phrases repeated back
- Emotion labeling – "you sound frustrated" – acknowledges emotion by identifying them
- Paraphrasing-use your own words to rephrase-allows for clarification
- Effective pauses –immediately before or after saying something meaningful
- Minimal encouragers – "uh-huh", I see-let's the caller know you are still listening
- Verbal tracking

We've talked about attitudes for active listening and referred to a couple of techniques you can use. Here are some common techniques:

ALS Techniques:

- **Mirror/reflecting** – reflecting back to the speaker key words or phrases they just used – allows you to reiterate key points or words
- **Emotion labeling** – *You sound very frustrated* – acknowledges the speakers emotion by identifying them
- **Paraphrasing** – using your own words to re-phrase key concepts or ideas – allows the speaker to correct any misinterpretation
- **Use of effective pauses:** immediately *before* or *after* saying something meaningful
- **Minimal Encouragers** – Uh-huh, I see, etc. This simply allows the speaker to hear that you are still there and listening
- **Verbal tracking** – When a caller gets off-point a technique to bring them back on topic, "How does what happened a month ago relate to the problem you are reporting today?" "I apologize, I'm not following how this relates to this issue", etc.



Active Listening Techniques

- Prompts
  - Also used to clarify
- Paraphrasing

- Clarification
  - Uses a *request* to obtain more info
  - Clarify when you're not sure of the meant
  - Watch out for slang
  - Consider generational or cultural differences

Minimal Encouragers

Use of uh-huh, I see, etc. This simply allows the speaker to hear that you are still there and listening. If a caller has ever asked you, "Are you still there?" consider using minimal encouragers more often. NOTE: Be careful about using the term "Okay", in some types of highly emotional calls. You may be told, "It's NOT OKAY!!" by the caller.

Prompts

- Are ways to solicit more information – may also be used in Clarification, listed below.
- Prompts allow the caller to respond to you, usually for the purpose of making something clear.

Paraphrasing

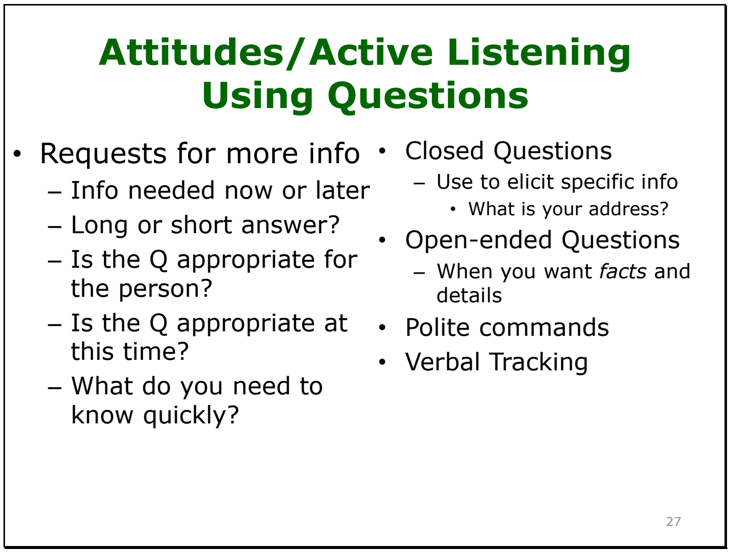
- Reiterating a point the caller has made in your own words – different from those of the caller
- Requires that YOU listen to the caller in order to paraphrase what was said – creates a focus on the caller
- It provides feedback to the caller
- It helps gain clarity – clears up misperceptions
- It allows for correction of *interpretations* to be made
- People appreciate being heard
- *It can mitigate anger escalation* and is a tool when intervening with a caller in crisis
- Use of paraphrasing helps eliminate *judgments, advice giving* and other barriers to listening

Clarification

- Uses *requests* to obtain more, specific information –related to paraphrasing and summarizing
- Clarify when you're not sure of the speakers meaning or intent-refer to the exchange above.
- Beware of euphemisms, vernacular, slang
- Ask for a definition
- Consider generational or cultural differences that might mask the meaning of a word

- Examples: "I can't do this anymore" – Call Taker (CT) Response: Do what?
- Caller: "deal with this". CT Response: deal with…?
- Caller": Life, I can't deal with life, I want out." CT Response: Out? Of what?
- Caller: "Out of life, out of living"

Does the clarification (or clarifying prompt) make the caller's intent clearer to you? What might have been assumed if the Call Taker did not ask for more clarification?



Attitudes/Active Listening Using Questions

- Requests for more info
  - Info needed now or later
  - Long or short answer?
  - Is the Q appropriate for the person?
  - Is the Q appropriate at this time?
  - What do you need to know quickly?
- Closed Questions
  - Use to elicit specific info
    - What is your address?
- Open-ended Questions
  - When you want *facts* and details
- Polite commands
- Verbal Tracking

27

Questions

A request for more information
Consider your goals – what do you need to know now, what do you want to know later?
Do you expect a long or short answer?
Is the question appropriate for this person?
Is the question appropriate at this time?
What do you need to know quickly, what can you take more time on?

Closed questions

Are used to elicit specific information – there is one answer
What is your name, address, phone number?
When did this happen
Have you been hurt?
What type of injuries do you have?

Open-ended questions

How were you injured?
What happened?
What did you see?
Where would he go?

In addition to closed or open-ended questions, there are other Active Listening Techniques that you can add to your tool box. You may use them already, but haven't labeled them:

Polite commands

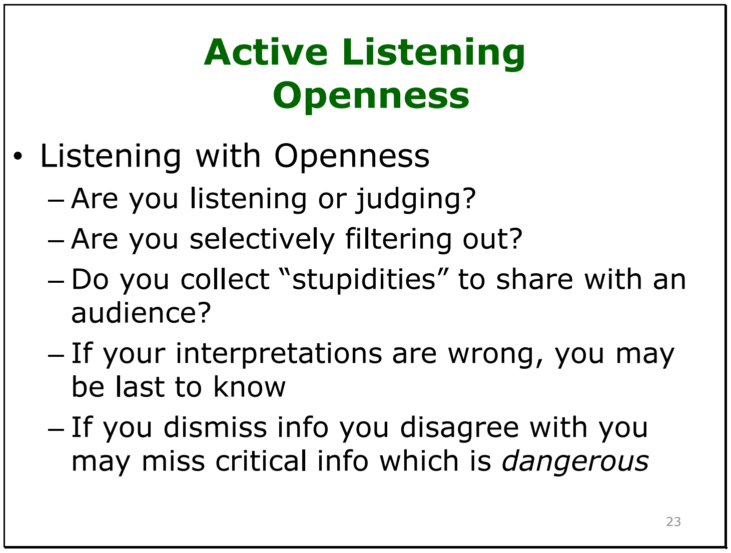
Tell me what you saw.
Give me some details about the party.
Tell me how we can help you today.

Verbal tracking

When callers get off point – well-timed verbal tracking brings them back on point
"I apologize, how does your neighbor play into the [problem] you're now reporting?"

Some callers don't provide any break in their reiteration of events, particularly when they are highly emotional.

You may need to politely interrupt, "Just a moment, can you back up? How this relates to [the problem]? Ok, let's go back to the part where [whatever]…'
All of these tools will help you not only interview, but truly *listen* to the caller.



Active Listening
Openness

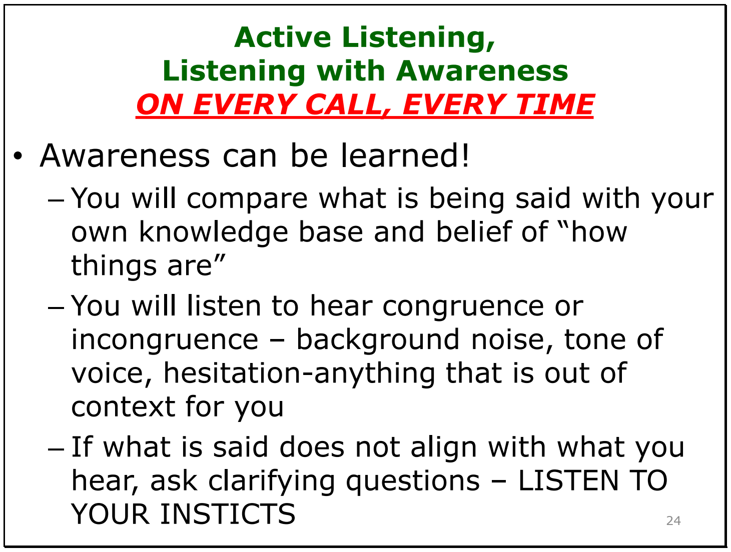
- Listening with Openness
  - Are you listening or judging?
  - Are you selectively filtering out?
  - Do you collect "stupidities" to share with an audience?
  - If your interpretations are wrong, you may be last to know
  - If you dismiss info you disagree with you may miss critical info which is *dangerous*

Listening with Openness

The book*, Messages* also points out that it is difficult to truly listen when you are judging or finding fault. You listen selectively, you filter out what you don't believe or want to hear. You "collect stupidities" to share with your co-workers or sympathetic audience.

The book, *Messages* makes critical points:

- **Judgments are gratifying, but we pay for them later**
- **If your interpretation is wrong, you're the last to know and you run the risk of making a mistake**
- **You don't grow in your job intellectually because you only grasp viewpoints you hold yourself.**
- **You dismiss others because you disagree with their ideas or circumstances and in doing so, may miss critical information**
- **You can become argumentative and lose the caller**
- **You ABSOLUTELY will miss important information – that is *dangerous*.**



**Active Listening,
Listening with Awareness**
ON EVERY CALL, EVERY TIME

- Awareness can be learned!
  - You will compare what is being said with your own knowledge base and belief of "how things are"
  - You will listen to hear congruence or incongruence – background noise, tone of voice, hesitation-anything that is out of context for you
  - If what is said does not align with what you hear, ask clarifying questions – LISTEN TO YOUR INSTICTS

Listening with Awareness

This is a critical *skill* that can be learned and improved!

You will compare what is being said to your own knowledge base of people and how things are in the world.

You will listen with awareness to hear congruence or incongruence. That is listening for tone of voice, hesitation, background noise or anything that you hear that puts the caller's information into or out of context for you.

If what the caller is saying does not align with what you are hearing in their voice inflections, background noise, etc. ASK CLARIFYING QUESTIONS. Your instincts will tell you when what is being said does not line up with what you are hearing or being told.

All of these tools will help you not only interview, but truly *listen* to the caller. ***ON EVERY CALL, EVERY TIME.***

Resources:
Active Communications, Mathew Westra, 1996 Brooks/Cole, Cengage Learning
Messages, the Communication Skills Book, Matthew McKay, Ph.D., Martha Davis, PhD. Patrick Fanning, Third Edition 2009 New Harbinger Publications, Inc.

CUSTOMER SERVICE
ON EVERY CALL, EVERY TIME

You will note that Customer Service is part of the "who we are" Public Safety Call Taker statement and is listed as well under the "Skills" list.

In the Telecommunicator I course, you will be asked the question: "Who are your customers"?

Good customer service is so important to communications agencies that many of you will find it in your own mission statement.

What type of service does your agency expect you to provide to your customers? Customer service is a term that can mean different things to different people. Do you clearly understand what level of service you are expected to provide?

[2]In their book *The Nordstrom Way to Customer Service Excellence*, authors Robert Spector & Patrick McCarthy offer these ideas:

- **Make your public voice or face a pleasant one.**
- **Create an atmosphere of helpfulness Create a lifetime experience for the customer, when you can – go the extra mile for a customer whenever you can.**
- **Create an atmosphere of professionalism.**
- **Provide a consistent experience across all channels with *all* callers.**
- **Consider the Nordstrom Employee Handbook- their only rule: Use Good Judgment in All Situations**
- **When you can, provide customers with alternatives to a flat "NO" (Find something you or they *can* do, not what they can't.**
- **Do what is right for the customer and right for the agency.**
- **Promote one main rule: The Golden Rule.**
- ***Listen to the customer.***
- **Understand the customer's need.**
- **Emphasize knowledge of the service you provide.**
- **Be honest and sincere.**
- **Become a source for new ideas within your agency.**
- **Take responsibility**.

---

[2] *The Nordstrom Way to Customer Service Excellence - A handbook for Implementing Great Service in Your Organization*, Robert Spector & Patrick McCarthy, John Wiley & Sons, Inc. 2005

PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES IN ANSWERING THE CALL

1. ***The customer may not always be "right" BUT, the customer is ALWAYS the customer***. Your job description probably includes a reference to customers. The first rule or principle of customer service is to know who your customers are and understand that no matter how difficult the customer may be to deal with at times, that individual is still your customer and your responsibility ***ON EVERY CALL, EVERY TIME***.

2. ***Be prepared.*** Be ready to write or enter into CAD all of the pertinent information. The first words the caller says may be the most important. Be prepared for anything. If you answer a non-emergency line and the caller happens to be reporting an emergency, it may catch you off guard.

3. ***Answer the call promptly***, usually no more than three rings. General 9-1-1 standards expect the call to be answered within ten seconds. Three rings are normally 8-12 seconds, depending on the telephone and telephone system. Agency standards may differ.

4. ***Answer in a manner that tells the caller whom they have reached***. Many agencies have a policy on what greeting is used: Some examples are:

    - "9-1-1, what are you reporting?"
    - "9-1-1, what is your emergency?"
    - "9-1-1, police, fire or medical?"
    - "Name of county, city or agency"
    - "Emergency, what are you reporting?"

    Business or non-emergency lines may be answered in a variety of ways.

    The key is to use *standard answering practices each time you answer the telephone*. Keep the call professional and courteous.

5. ***The way you answer the telephone sets the tone for the entire call.*** If you are short and abrupt, the caller may respond the same way. If you are professional and courteous, the caller may respond TO YOU better by answering your questions. Persons in crisis can be difficult to deal with; however, the Call Taker is a trained professional. Setting a calm, professional tone at the beginning of the call, no matter how difficult the caller, will only improve your chances of being able to gather the necessary information.

6. ***Speak clearly so the caller can hear and understand you***. This is especially important for special needs callers such as hearing/speech impaired or child callers. Use clear terminology; avoid police/fire/EMS slang or technical terms and be aware of your voice volume.

7. ***All callers deserve courtesy and respect.*** One of the most professional things you can do with a caller is listen to them and use common courtesy. *Always* determine whether a call is an emergency before placing it on hold. There may be times when you need to place callers on hold to obtain needed information or to answer another incoming line. *Politely explain* your need to place them on hold and let them know you will be back with them as soon as possible. Do not answer the call with "9-1-1 can you hold", then put the caller on "hold" before the caller can respond. Know your agency policy of using "hold" on a 9-1-1 call. It is nearly impossible to be TOO courteous.

8. ***Consider an empathetic or compassionate response*** to a caller in need or crisis as a customer service "gift". The Call Taker that sounds like she cares about the caller, is in fact, providing the customer a valuable service.

9. ***Impart to the caller that you have an interest them***. Avoid voice inflections that may turn the contact confrontational. It is appropriate to use some type of communication or feedback that tells the caller you are listening, even an occasional "uh-huh", or "I see" (ACTIVE LISTENING SKILLS – minimal encouragers). Callers can become anxious when met with total silence on the other end of the line as they are trying to explain their problem. This is common courtesy and an acceptable technique in building rapport with a caller.

10. ***Listening, rather than just "hearing***", may provide crucial information, otherwise missed. Listening includes hearing background noise, voice inflection, hesitation on the part of the caller, etc. Listening shows you care about what the caller is saying. (See: Active Listening Skills).

11. ***Be aware of caller safety issues***. Determine if it is *safe* for the caller to remain on the telephone. Let the caller determine if s/he is safe or what s/he needs to do to ensure his/her own safety. The need to obtain updated information is not more important that the immediate safety of the caller.

12. ***Be cognizant of caller and responder safety issues*** as they are both our customers.

13. ***Do not bring your personal opinions, prejudices, or biases to the call***. Call Takers must be able to deal with any number of persons from a variety of ethnic or cultural origins, educational backgrounds, etc. EFFECTIVE Call Takers DO NOT prejudge a situation. They listen carefully to the caller and avoid making judgments before obtaining all pertinent information. Avoid the pitfall of "I've heard it all before" where you read something into a call that is not there and fail to pick up on important or pertinent information.

14. ***Get first-hand information when possible and use open-ended questions***. Ask to speak to the person who witnessed or was involved in the incident. Ask open-ended questions, not questions that can be answered with "yes" or "no", when you need important or specific information. People in a hurry or under a great deal of stress may not hear your question and answer "yes" or "no" inappropriately. An example, "Confirm your address for me", rather than "Are you at _ _ _ _ (location caller gave you)?" Callers may answer, "Yes" without really hearing your question. It is appropriate to ask yes/no response questions in some instances, but the Call Taker should make sure critical information is repeated rather than rely on a yes/no answer to confirm.

15. ***Avoid "leading" questions***. An example, "Was he a white male?" Instead, ask, "What race was he?" Ask questions that allow the caller to tell *you* what happened.

16. ***Ask the question for which you want the answer***. An example, ask for an address rather than "where do you live?"

17. ***"Controlling" the call, means to politely interview a caller in the most efficient manner*** in order to obtain the necessary information. Although exercising control during the interview to get the necessary information is very important, unnecessary interruption of the caller, who is providing the information required, may turn a cooperative caller into a difficult one. A caller, who is uncooperative because of a poor interview technique, does nothing to improve the Call Taker's ability to get the information needed.

One technique you might consider when you need to quickly obtain information from a caller is to preface your interview with a statement like, "I need to quickly ask you some questions, here, so that we can get the information out to the (responders), okay?" An answer in the affirmative is a tacit agreement by the caller that they understand your need to ask them questions and their need to quickly answer them. You have gained the *support* of the caller rather than resistance because of the way in which you conducted the interview.

Phrases that show professionalism and that you have control of the call:

- "I understand"
- "I need you to ---"
- "I want to help you, let me start by asking you some questions"

18. ***All callers reporting a single incident*** should be at least quickly interviewed in order to obtain essential information as well as RP/witness information. An example would be multiple calls regarding an accident. Though there may a report of an accident, do you really have all the information regarding injuries? Callers should be asked at a minimum to provide RP information if they witnessed the incident. *This is good documentation*. Situations change; additional callers may be able to provide important updates to the event.

19. ***Know your agency's policy on 9-1-1 hang-up calls and hang-up callbacks***. Enhanced 9-1-1 provides the Call Taker with a way to call back on a 9-1-1-hangup call. Most agencies will have protocols for callbacks. The following is provided for information as a way in which to better serve the customer who may be in need of assistance, but has had to hang up the phone before speaking to the Call Taker.

20. Document all hang-up calls and unless you have a policy that says otherwise and follow your agency policies or protocols. **All silent calls should be queried with a TTY**. If you cannot confirm that a call was accidentally placed, consider your agency liability if you do *not* send a response. In the State of Washington, the taxpayer pays for the privilege of having an Enhanced 9-1-1 System. Consider the phrase "when in doubt, send them out".

Other methods of confirming the need for a public safety response on a 9-1-1 call include:

- Ask the caller who reports that "children were playing on the phone" a series of quick questions – asked one at a time – wait for the response to each before continuing:
- How old is the child?
- What is the child's name?
- Let me speak to the child
- If the child comes to the phone simply ask the child why he or she dialed 9-1-1. If the child hesitates in any way, ask if s/he is comfortable talking to you. If s/he is, ask if there is a problem at home you can help with. If the child does not want to talk to you, consider sending a police response unless you are sure there is no problem at the residence and that an adult is not coaching the child.
- If on a callback, someone answers the phone and says there is no problem, say***, "Please let me speak to the other person there".*** If another person comes to the phone, ask if s/he can speak freely and if help is needed.

21. **Tell the caller what to expect**- what you will be doing. Your agency should have a standardized "what now" set of statements that will allow you to tell the caller what is going to happen as a result of their call.
22. **Ask the caller to call back if anything changes**. This is critical on any high-risk call you are handling where you or the caller opt to disconnect before responders arrive.
23. ***Customer Service means being the ultimate professional***. Know your job, your SOPs, SOGs, agency performance standards and expectations and live up to that ***ON EVERY CALL EVERY TIME***.

What would it take for your agency to be called the Nordstrom of Comm Centers?

Justice Based Policing & Washington State Telecommunicator Training

In 2011, the King County Sheriff's Office, Seattle Police Department, and Washington State Criminal Justice Training Commission created a law enforcement strategy entitled Justice Based Policing.

JBP has four "pillars" of philosophy:

Listen – allow people to give their side of a story, give them voice and let them vent.
Explain- explain what you are doing, what they can do and what is going to happen
Equity – Tell them why you are taking action. The reason must be fair and free of bias, and show that their (the customer's) input was taken into consideration
Dignity- act with dignity and leave them with their dignity

The purpose is to elevate the quality of the interaction between law enforcement and the public and to change some of the public's negative perception of law enforcement. The end result is expected to be improved officer safety and increased community trust.

The scope of the project includes working with a university to create a curriculum for line-officers that goes into the principles and research related to procedural justice and police legitimacy.

As part of this strategy, the principles of JBP will be expected to be included in telecommunicator training.

As of the date of this revision, 2011, the WSCJTC Telecommunicator I-Basic Call Taker course includes training topics that support the foundational principles of Justice Based Policing.

Listen:
In Unit 2 – there is a section devoted solely to Active Listening Skills including:

- Listening for content and context
- Listening with empathy
- Listening with openness
  - Suspending interpretation & judgments
- Listening with awareness
- Patience
- Use of active listening techniques to let the caller know he is being listened to

Explain:
Unit 2 – Customer service "what now?" Tell the customer what to expect – what will happen with this call?

Equity:
Unit 2 – Active listening and customer service – "do not bring personal opinions, biases or prejudice into the call" and suspend interpretations and judgments are learning points reiterated in the curriculum.

Dignity:
Unit 2 – Customer Service, Unit 3 – Callers in Crisis, Mentally Ill callers, Abusive/Hostile or Angry Callers and other challenging types of callers.

Telecommunicator training has focused on excellent customer service and appropriate communications methods for 9-1-1 call takers and law enforcement/fire dispatchers for the last 10 years. This training meets the expectations of agencies working with their communities to provide professional, fair and equitable public safety services to their communities.

Unit References:
APCO Public Safety Telecommunicator Minimum Training Standard
Occupational Analysis Final – Public Safety Call Taker

Quick Series – *Managing Your Stress*
US Dept. of Health and Human Services – HIPAA
Revised Code of Washington
WSCJTC ©Telecommunicator I – Basic Call Taker, 1996-2002
FEMA NIMS (IS700) – National Incident Management System
FEMA Incident Command System
Active Communication, Matthew Westra, Brooks/Cole CENGAGE Learning, 1996
Messages, the Communications Skills Book, Matthew McKay, Martha Davis, Patrick Fanning, New Harbinger Publications, Inc. 2009
The Nordstrom Way to Customer Service Excellence - A handbook for Implementing Great Service in Your Organization, Robert Spector & Patrick McCarthy, John Wiley & Sons, Inc. 2005
Robert Bragg, Washington State Criminal Justice Training Commission, physical and defensive tactics
The Four Pillars of Justice Based Policing – Listen and Explain with Equity and Dignity (King County Sheriff-Sue Rahr, Seattle Police Chief-John Diaz and WSCJTC Executive Director-Joe Hawe, April 2011
Liability Awareness revision, Steve Puz, Washington State Office of the Attorney General, Assistant Attorney General, 2011

Unit 3

Call Processing

UNIT TITLE: **UNIT 3 – CALL PROCESSING**

LEARNING OBJECTIVES FOR THIS UNIT:

At the end of this unit of study when given a real or hypothetical scenario or question, the student will be able to:

- List the 6 Ws
- List the things that help determine the severity (and priority) of a call
- Describe two things you should do when terminating (ending) a call for service
- List the responder safety questions you can ask the caller and relay to the responders to help ensure responder safety
- Identify the key components of a successful crisis intervention
- List the techniques described in the course that may be used when taking calls from depressed individuals
- List the techniques described in the curriculum, that can be used with paranoid, delusional or schizophrenic callers
- List the pre-suicidal situations described in the course
- List the possible indicators of a suicide-by-cop intention
- List the most important concerns on assessing suicidal risk
- Identify each component of the acronym PLAIDPALS in suicide assessment
- Describe the ways in which you may help a suicidal caller, as described in the curriculum
- Provide a short description of the concept of "Equal Access" to 9-1-1 services for the deaf or disabled population
- List the components of persistent repetition

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this section is to instruct the Call Taker on techniques for taking 9-1-1 calls in an efficient manner. It will discuss techniques for dealing with a variety of callers and how to interview them to obtain information as accurately and efficiently as possible while maintaining an awareness of caller and responder safety issues.

OBTAINING THE INFORMATION

The Call Taker is the primary link between the public and the emergency services they need. The abilities of a Call Taker contribute directly to the success of the public safety response. There is a general order in obtaining information from a caller although not all information may be needed for every call.

This is an overview; each step will be reviewed thoroughly.

The following is basic information related to most types of calls. Later in the program, specific questions for each type of call will be reviewed.

A helpful hint may be to think of some of the vital pieces of information as **"The 6 W's". Where, What, When, Who/Why, Weapons**.

The general order in which information is obtained is:

- Location (**Where**)
- Type of Incident (**What**)
- Severity (Including time lapse - **When, Weapons**, injury, threats or assault, drugs or alcohol involvement)
- Suspect or suspect vehicle information (**Who/Why**) as well as direction of travel
- Victim/Caller/Witness and call back number information

For any call, these questions should be asked. These "**All-Caller Questions"** are:

- **Location**
  - **Where help is needed**
  - Where incident occurred
  - Where victim or witness is
  - Where contact needs to be made, if necessary

- **What type of incident is being reported**
  - Law enforcement requests: what type of incident is occurring or has occurred
  - Fire requests: what type of fire response
  - Medical calls: chief complaint and, if possible, patient age/gender, status of consciousness and breathing

- **Severity including:**
  - Time lapse
  - Weapons
  - Drugs/alcohol
  - Injuries
  - Threats
  - Hazards
  - Other questions affecting responder and caller safety if warranted by the type of call

- **Caller information**
    - Location
    - Call back number
    - Whether contact with caller needs to be made by responders

Each section will be discussed individually.

LOCATION:

Always confirm location information. Have the ***caller*** repeat the location. Locations may be exact house addresses, intersections, referenced from a landmark, route and boxes, mile markers, etc. It is important that geography be a primary training topic for every Call Taker and dispatcher. Knowledge of the service area is vital to the efficient processing of calls. ***Verify the ALI information*** if available. **Obtaining a *location where help is needed* is the one single piece of information that must be obtained in order to start assistance.**

- ***Street address*:** includes any individual numbers of the house, apartment complex, etc. and the street name. The street address should also include apartment, space or suite numbers. Directional indicators such as north, south, east or west (or any combination) are important to the street address. It is imperative that the Call Taker know the difference between pre-directional (the direction indicator coming before the street name or number) and post-directional indicators (the directional indicator coming after the street name or number. An example of a pre-directional indicator use would be 14324 N.E. Pine Avenue. The post-directional indicator use would have the address as 14324 Pine Avenue N.E. In a number of areas of our state, there are duplicate addresses whose only difference is the position of the directional indicator. If such areas exist in your jurisdiction, you will need to be aware of them in order to verify this information.

- *If an address includes a* ***street-type designation*** (Street, Avenue, Lane, Way, Court, Circle, or Boulevard, etc.), that identifier should be recorded with the address. Some street names are duplicated with different street-type designators (Sunset Avenue, Sunset Court, etc.).

- ***Positional address***: This is when the caller provides the location as based on his or her physical relationship to a landmark or building. The caller may describe a location from a common landmark or in reference from where they are making the call (i.e., on the right side of the house as you are facing the front door). The caller may describe his/her position as being on the 3rd floor, west wing, or south side of a building. If a caller does not know where they are calling from, there are ways you can assist them:

    - Ask them to look for landmarks
    - Have them name businesses nearby
    - Look at street signs
    - Look at the phone number listed on the phone (not always accurate)
    - Ask where they were driving from and to
    - Look for pieces of mail that may have an address on it
    - If near a residence, get license plate numbers from cars in nearby driveways and run them
    - If inside a residence, what are the names of the people who live there?

- ***Type of location***: Residence, business (including business name), field, school, park, intersection, street, driveway, hospital, mall, racetrack, alley, etc. If dealing with an alley, find out what the alley is between or behind. If it is an apartment building or condominium, get the name of the complex.

- ***Rural routes***: Often, rural routes are not planned on a countywide basis, but rather for a certain area. If an address is a rural route, the exact route and box number should be obtained as well as detailed directions from a main road. In recent years, rural route and box addresses have been eliminated because they are not compatible with addressing systems needed for Enhanced 9-1-1. However, some callers may resort to this former addressing system when under the stress of an emergency.

- ***City***: Do not hesitate to ask a caller from which city they are calling. Many cities duplicate street names.

You must determine the location of occurrence to assign the proper jurisdiction. The location of the caller, victim, witnesses, etc. must also be obtained if different from the location of occurrence for law enforcement calls so that responders know where contact needs to be made.

A caller's location may not be within the jurisdiction where the incident occurred. In this case, your department policy will prevail as to how the call is handled. It is important to remember that callers needing assistance may not always be within your jurisdictional boundaries, but should be within your power to assist. You may help them by notifying another agency, making a referral, transferring their call, or providing them with a telephone number.

TYPE OF INCIDENT:

The type of incident must be determined in order to properly assign police, fire or EMS units (or any combination). Detailed information on the incident type can better determine the level of response, however, that much detail is not always available. Be inquisitive; ask questions that clarify the incident for you. Most agencies have a policy on a basic response for call types where very little information can be obtained. For instance, a hang up call may warrant an automatic law enforcement response. Upon arrival, the police officer sees smoke and flames and the fire department would then be dispatched.

SEVERITY OR SERIOUSNESS:

Each call type has a level of severity or seriousness to it. Determining the severity of the call sets up the proper response to the call. Listen to the background of the call to what is being said, but also what is being implied, background noise, etc.

- **TIME LAPSE:** *In-progress calls* usually have a higher priority than "cold" reports. A burglary call is received where the caller hears someone in the house. This call would be classified as an emergency in most cases. *When dealing with an in-progress call, determine if the caller is safe to stay on the line* so you can update the responding units as changes occur. This may also provide the caller with a sense of safety while involved in the incident. Another time, a burglary is reported where items were taken from the residence sometime in the past several weeks while the residents were on vacation. If it was determined no danger to the caller existed then this call would be treated as a non-emergency or lower priority call. Each agency should have a clear understanding of terms such as: *just occurred, occurred recently, occurred prior*, etc. "Just occurred" may mean within the last 5 minutes for one agency, and 5-10 minutes for another.

- **WEAPONS**: The fact that weapons are reportedly involved changes the priority of the call greatly. The Call Taker should obtain *who* has the weapons, *what type*, *where the weapons are,* and will the caller and other people be safe from the weapon. Questions about weapons should include:

    - Type of weapon
        - Gun
        - Handgun
        - Rifle
        - Shotgun
        - Other
        - Description
            - Revolver
            - Semi-automatic
            - Automatic
            - Other information color, etc.
            - Caliber
            - Ammunition
            - How carried
            - Amount
        - Cutting/Sharp-edged Instrument
            - Knife
            - Sword
            - Machete
            - Other
            - Description
            - Blade length
            - Other
        - Other weapons
            - Type
            - Description
            - How used

Was the weapon used, threatened, implied, and brandished? If it is kept in a vehicle, where is it usually kept? *Is there access to other weapons on the premises? If so, where are they*?

- **INJURIES**: Finding out if there are injuries is a vital piece of information on police, fire and EMS calls. The notification of injuries or other medical problems or issues would prompt an additional fire/EMS response.
    - *Where is the injured party located*?
    - *How many persons are injured*?
    - *What is the nature of the injuries*?

- **ALCOHOL OR DRUG USE**: May raise the severity of the call due to the potential for participants to behave in an unpredictable manner.

- **ASSAULTIVE OR THREATENING BEHAVIOR**: Due to the potential threat of injury to persons at the scene and responders.

LOCATION OF CALLER, VICTIM, OR WITNESS: It is important that the safety of the caller/victim/witness be addressed. They may be at a separate location from where the incident occurred. They may or may not be in the presence of the suspect. For fire and emergency EMS calls, the caller may be trapped or exposed to fire, smoke, or dangerous materials. SAFETY OF THE CALLER OR ENDANGERED PERSONS SHOULD ALWAYS BE CONSIDERED. ASK THE CALLER, "CAN YOU SAFELY REMAIN ON THE PHONE WITH ME?" OR "IS IT SAFE FOR YOU TO STAY ON THE PHONE WITH ME?"

DESCRIPTION OF PERSONS: Get complete descriptions using standardized formats and descriptors. Head-to-toe, outside-to-inside!

- Descriptions of people are obtained in the following order: race, gender, height, weight, hair color, eye color, scars, marks, tattoos, facial hair, glasses, and any other pertinent information such as amputated limbs, etc.

- Use NCIC abbreviations for descriptors:
  - Racial Descriptors: W, B, A, I, O
    - Hispanic or Latino if policy dictates
  - Gender: M, F
  - Age: Actual age/DOB if known, or A/Adult J/Juvenile
  - Height: 5"5= 505; 6'2"=602, etc., or "thin, medium, or heavy build"
  - Weight: three digits, i.e., 95 lbs. = 095, 135 lbs. = 135
  - Hair and eye color abbreviations: refer to NCIC code book
  - Clothing descriptions are obtained from HEAD to TOE and from the OUTSIDE to the INSIDE
    - Hat or headgear
    - Coat, jacket, sweater
    - Shirt, blouse, top
    - Pants, shorts, skirt, leg coverings
    - Shoes
    - Accessories or other
- For multiple suspects, have the caller describe one at a time, for example: #1: WMA 6'03", #2: BMA male 5'11"
- Other details: The state of mind (angry, depressed, or delusional) or physical condition including alcohol, medication, and narcotic involvement are important details for caller and responder safety purposes.

DESCRIPTION OF VEHICLES: Get complete descriptions using standardized formats and descriptors.

- Descriptions of vehicles are obtained in the following order: Color, year, make/model, body style, accessories, the license number and the license state. There is an acronym for this order: **CYMBALS** (Color, Year, Make/Model, Body Style, Accessories, License, and State).
- Use NCIC codes for color, make, model, style, and state of issuance.
- Use your agency's phonetic alphabet when verbalizing or dispatching the license information.
- For multi-colored vehicles, the primary color or the color that is "on top" should be listed first (brown over tan).

DIRECTION OF TRAVEL: The direction of travel may be described in different ways:

- An actual direction (north, south, east or west)
- "Down" the street…
- "Up" the road…
- "Toward" the front, back, side of the building….
- "Across" the street or field…
- "Through" the store…

A Call Taker should narrow down these directions as much as possible. Knowledge of the geography is important for Call Takers and dispatchers. If a caller says the suspect is driving toward the river, the Call Taker should be able to determine the direction based on the location of the call. If necessary, the Call Taker can determine the proper direction of travel by using maps.

BASIC REPORTING PARTY DATA: Once details of a call are obtained, the basic reporting party data should be documented for record keeping purposes. This basic data includes:

- Name of caller
- Home address
- Home telephone number
- Is the caller a victim, witness, or reporting for someone else?
- DOB of caller if appropriate to check for protection, no-contact, or other court orders
- **Callback** telephone number for the caller if different from the home telephone number

TERMINATING THE CALL:

Calls should not be terminated too quickly. The Call Taker should let the caller know what will happen with their call before hanging up.

- ***Ask them to call back if the situation changes***
- DO NOT prolong the call longer than necessary.
- Tell the caller what you are going to do with their call (respond, refer, call back, dispatch, etc.).
- DO what you say you are going to do. If you said you would get information and get back with them, then do that.
- DO NOT give specific response times ("they'll be right there", "they're on the way"", and they'll be there in 5-10 minutes"). Some alternative wording is: "The police department has been advised", "Units have been dispatched" (if they have).
- Stay on the line with the caller if the situation is changing rapidly and if it is *safe for the caller to do so.*
- Give the caller an action to follow to prevent panic or escalation if appropriate.
- Be courteous and professional in your closure of the call. It is okay to say thank you to a caller, even though they called you. It is a courteous way to end the call.

CALL DOCUMENTATION

- *Record ALL pertinent and important information*. DO NOT rely on memory.
- ***DON'T*** rely on someone else to "hear" you with verbal updates.
- *On manual systems, obtain accurate time of receipt of call* (incident cards, response sheets, etc.). Correct times on a call are very important.
- *CAD entry: enter calls immediately so the accurate time is recorded*.
- Use the acceptable "shorthand" of your agency. Document important information in short statements as opposed to run-on sentences. Consider the use of an agency-accepted set of abbreviations.
- Update the call when additional pertinent information is obtained.
- *Remember: telephone lines, radio transmissions, MDT/MCT messages, and other types of communications are or may be recorded*. This type of documentation can be subject to public disclosure. Do not say or write anything you would not want reviewed in court or by the public.
- Use clear terminology and language. Avoid using legal terms or police/fire slang or code words.
- Use practical and prioritized sequencing to your questioning. Get in the habit of asking for information in a standardized order and format asking first for ***the location where help is needed***. If you use the same questioning sequences, good habits will form. This means you are less likely to forget to ask specific information or become confused during a fast-paced or highly emotional call. Obtain sufficient information for a proper response. The least amount of information you must have is *location where help is needed*. Whenever possible, obtain information on the type, severity (including weapons, injury, and alcohol/drug use), time lapse, etc. The goal is to obtain all pertinent information.
- Taking assertive control of the conversation does not mean rudely interrupting the caller. Do not let the caller lead you, but do listen to the caller. Many times, they will answer your question before it is asked. Determine the priority of the call on the reported details, not on the attitude of the caller.
- Do not hang up unless you are comfortable with the information.

- Determine the best method of questioning. Some questions need to be phrased “open ended”, asking the caller questions that will require them to explain what is going on. Other questions should be phrased as closed ended, where the caller’s choices are limited. Avoid leading and secondary questions such as, “was he a white male?” this is leading the caller. Let the caller tell you and only ask one question at a time.
- The Call Taker is the first public safety person involved. If the call is changing rapidly, ask the caller if he/she can safely stay on the line to provide updated information. If the caller cannot remain on the line, is it safe for them to lay the telephone down without hanging up?
- Visualize the scene and the situation. If you think it, then ask it. Make sure you understand the situation. You will be better able to determine the appropriate level of response and relay accurate information.

DANGEROUS HABITS:

Four common assumptions that result in inaccurate or insufficient information being obtained:

- *All calls are the same*: Do not be pulled into thinking all calls are the same. Neither all calls about the same incident nor all calls of one type are necessarily the same. Additional calls about one incident may have supplementary information or indicate a change in the status of the incident.

- *The call does not sound real*. Do not disbelieve the caller just because the call does not sound real. Callers may be in shock or in a state of confusion.

- *The reporting party is hysterical*. The excitement level of a caller should not automatically make a call a high priority. Do not under or overestimate the severity of the call based on the caller’s demeanor. People react in a variety of ways to a crisis.

- *The reporting party is not very intelligent because they speak slowly or do not speak English*. Do not treat an elderly, non-English, or special needs caller as if they are not capable of providing quality information. This may result in an angry caller.

- *The caller is a frequent caller* therefore; the call is unlikely to be important.

NOTE: Most people will access the public safety emergency system only once or twice in their lifetime. To them, their problem is important. TREAT THEM WITH COURTESY AND RESPECT!

PROPER ROUTING OF CALLS

The general nature of the reported incident determines the primary responder (police, fire, or EMS). Some calls require a combination of public safety agencies to respond.

- Law enforcement calls with hazardous materials involved should also initiate a fire/Hazmat team response.
- Law enforcement calls where injuries are present also warrant an EMS response.
- A Fire/EMS call where a crime scene exists needs a law enforcement response.
- Fire/EMS calls where traffic control is needed should get a law enforcement response also.
- Fire/EMS calls where responder safety is in question should warrant a law enforcement response.

UNKNOWN TYPE CALLS

Agency policies and procedures should outline how an unknown type call will be handled. These may be 9-1-1 hang-up or other calls where only a location can be obtained. A common method is to send law enforcement first and they will determine if further responses are needed.

REFERRAL CALLS

- Find out exactly what help the caller needs before referring the call. Know your agency and community's resources to make an appropriate and accurate referral.

- If you are gathering information from the caller to relay to another agency or department, make sure you record accurate information. In most cases, it is more efficient to either transfer the caller or have the caller place a call to the other agency him/herself.

RESPONDER SAFETY

The thoroughness and accuracy of the Call Taker directly affects law enforcement, fire and EMS responder safety. You must obtain and provide accurate information. Calls must be prioritized correctly.

This includes all information you can obtain about:

- Weapons
- Assaultive or threatening behavior
- Location of the suspect (s)
- Alcohol or drug use
- In-progress vs. "cold" calls
- Hazardous material involvement
- Infectious disease or bio-hazard information *only as allowable by agency policy*
- Protection, no-contact, restraining order information, particularly those with "caution" notations
- Wanted/Warrant information
- WACIC officer safety flags or information
- Information about the presence of hazards at the site, some of which may include:
    - Animals that may pose a threat to the responder (i.e., loose dog in the back yard).
    - Physical hazards such as downed wires, roadway obstructions, hazardous conditions, covered in-ground swimming pool, etc.

For those agencies using a CAD (computer aided dispatch) system, it may be possible to check features such as:

- **Premises file information**. This file may designate information such as hazardous material storage, history of violence or weapon storage/access, specific medical information on a patient (i.e., baby with an apnea monitor).

- **Previous event/history file**. This feature may allow a Call Taker to check a specific address for information about previous calls. Previous calls of domestic or other types of violence or assault, drug activity, warrant arrests, etc. can be provided to responders.

- **Events in proximity file**. This file may allow you to see what other calls are going on in the area. This may allow the Call Taker to see related events or catch a duplication of the call being entered.

If these files are readily available to the Call Taker, it is recommended that they be checked on every call for the safety of responders, unless agency policy dictates otherwise.

TECHNIQUES FOR HANDLING DIFFERENT TYPES OF CALLERS

In order to obtain information in an efficient manner, a Call Taker must be able to interview callers in a professional, business-like way. While many callers are polite and helpful, some callers may be extremely excited, hysterical, angry or hostile, even abusive. Other callers may be very uneasy about calling for assistance and may be unsure of the type of help they need.

Callers who are unsure about the assistance they need may be vague in their manner or the questions they ask. For example:

- Asking for a referral number instead of stating the problem or a domestic violence victim may ask for a referral to a domestic violence hotline when an immediate police response is needed.
- Callers may ask for the number to the hospital emergency room rather than ask for an EMS response directly.

In order to obtain information in an orderly fashion, the Call Taker must be able to control the conversation when it becomes necessary.

The Call Taker must recognize the difference between controlling the conversation and interfering with the caller relaying information. The Call Taker should begin to control the conversation firmly, but courteously, when the caller is not providing the necessary information. If the caller is hysterical or overly excited, the Call Taker must be able to calm the caller in order to obtain the location and type of occurrence as well as other information about the call. If the caller tends to ramble on or stray from the point, the Call Taker must develop the skills to politely take control of the conversation. This section will outline some of the types of callers a Call Taker will encounter:

CALLERS IN CRISIS

Often a crisis occurs when there has been a precipitating event that has occurred within the last 24-48 hours and the subject's normal coping mechanisms have failed to resolve the situation. When normal coping mechanisms fail, the subject goes into *crisis.*

In the crisis state, the subject is behaving on an intense *emotional* level rather than a *rational or thinking* level in response to a highly stressful situation. The situation or event is perceived to be a *threat* to the emotional, psychological, and/or physical needs of the subject.

- *Emotions* not *reason* are controlling the person's actions
- IF THE PERSON FEELS HE IS IN CRISIS…***HE IS!***
- It is NOT *our* perception that is important here - it is his
- People will generally turn inward, away from usual support systems & feel isolated

Listening for Emotion

The purpose of crisis intervention is to bring the person back into the "normal functioning level" range. As rationality increases, the fulcrum brings down the emotional level closer to the normal range.

- *Feelings* are universal, *experiences* are *not*.
- It is possible to understand feelings without having gone through the same experience.
- Do not make assumptions about a person's feelings based on circumstances.

People communicate in one of two ways:

- *Content* – the facts, what is stated
- *Emotion* – emotional reaction to the facts
    - *Context* – the emotional or extraneous parts of verbal communications – what is happening in the situation when the communication takes place?

To be an effective Call Taker, you must work to train yourself to *listen for emotions* surrounding the content of a caller's narrative. Remember, listening for emotion is part of Active Listening.

- ***It is the emotional reaction and behavior to a situation that makes it a crisis,*** not the facts of the situation.
- How the person feels about the situation will strongly influence behavior

- ***Influencing the caller's emotions will help influence the caller's behavior.***

Tips for Dealing with Callers in Crisis

- Be accepting
- Assume a non-judgmental attitude
- Do not inject your values into the situation
- The caller's feelings, values, lifestyle and opinions are what matter

These attitudes will be used across the different caller types discussed in this course. The accepting non-judgmental attitude is a tool to use not only with suicidal callers, but the mentally ill as well as hostage takers or barricaded subjects, basically, anyone in crisis.

Philosophy of Intervention

- **Philosophy - Self Control** –
  - The *only* aspect of a crisis call that the Call Taker has absolute control of is his or her own emotions.
  - *When confronted with any difficult caller, the first step is not to control his behavior, but to control your own.*
    - Consider this **approach**:
      - Don't confuse getting even with getting what you want from the caller
      - Work toward *de-escalation of the confrontation* in order to lower tension.
      - Focus on the *process* rather than the outcome (satisfy each other's needs)
- **Philosophy - Understand the Different Emotions** – and that the caller may be under the influence of one or more of the following emotions:
  - Anger
  - Frustration
  - Fear
  - Confusion
  - Depression
    - Consider this **approach**:
      - Give the caller a "hearing"
        - People want to be understood
        - Listening is the cheapest, yet most effective concession you can make
        - Show respect
- **Philosophy – Empathy**
  - To see through the eyes of another
  - Empathy absorbs tension ("Let me be sure I heard what you just said", "I can understand how you would be upset over that")
- **Philosophy – Being Right is not the issue**
  - Attempting to get it right is the goal.
  - Your tone of voice indicates your attitude.
  - Arguing, debating and logic do not work in the early stages of crisis.
  - Calm, controlled demeanor may be more effective than a brilliant argument.
- **Philosophy – Problem Solving**
  - Create a positive atmosphere for problem solving.
  - Don't argue.
  - Understand that people don't always mean what they say.
    - Listen for meaning – unsatisfied needs.

    - People like hostage negotiators are not in the business of meeting demands, but *are* in the business of satisfying needs.
        - Consider this **approach**:
            - Really *listen* to the caller
            - Acknowledge his/her point
                - This does not equate to agreement, it just means you acknowledge his point of view
            - Agree whenever you can without conceding
            - Find common ground

- **Philosophy – Understanding Basic Human Needs**
    - Security
        - Physical and emotional
    - Recognition
        - Understand his point of view
    - Control
        - Caller feels s/he has some
    - Dignity
        - Saving face
    - Accomplishment
        - The caller has achieved something
    - Obstacles to agreement:
        - Unsatisfied needs
        - Fear of losing face
        - Not vested
        - Not yet ready for an agreement
        - Inclination to resist against perceived aggressions
        - Sense of being misunderstood or mistreated
        - Feeling aggrieved or maligned

Summary

We want to focus attempting to establish rapport and diffuse intense emotions as we attempt to return the caller in crisis to a more rational thinking level.

The key components of a successful crisis intervention are:

- Diffuse the person's intense emotions
- Assist them in returning to his or her normal functioning (rational) level
- Buy time – allow for the return of rational thought vs. emotional response
- Establish rapport with the individual through empathetic communication
- Gain information – on the person/persons involved, the crisis trigger, for public safety response, anything that may be useful in bringing the crisis to an end

MENTALLY ILL CALLERS

Just as anyone else, mentally disturbed callers have emergencies, too. These calls should be handled seriously and with the same professionalism afforded any other caller.

Do not let your feelings about mental disabilities play a part in the call. Distinguish between what may sound like a person who has a mental disability and the possibility of a medical problem.

Depressed Individuals

Over 17 million Americans suffer from depression in a given year, making it one of the most common and misdiagnosed illnesses. It may consist of:

- Persistent sad or "empty" feelings or moods
- Feelings of hopelessness, helplessness, guilt, pessimism, worthlessness
- Drug/Alcohol abuse
- Chronic fatigue or loss of interest in ordinary activities including sex
- Eating or sleeping pattern disturbances
- Irritability, crying, generalized anxiety, panic attacks
- Hypochondria
- Inability to concentrate, remember or make decisions
- Suicidal thoughts
- Persistent physical complaints that do not respond to treatment

Most individuals will suffer at least one bout of "depression" that may last for days or weeks, at least one time in their lives.

Techniques for consideration when dealing with persons you believe may be suffering from depression:

Ask about use of medication.

Techniques that may be used:

- **Allow for slow responses**, through use of open-ended questions. Be prepared for long pauses.
- **Use an empathetic, understanding, nurturing tone** exuding care and concern. Reassure the person throughout the conversation. Use mirroring to reflect feelings back to the caller, even feelings of anger, resentment, and pain. This technique lets them know that it's okay to express those feelings to you – that you can handle it. Be ready to truly accept those emotions without reacting in a punitive or threatening manner-the caller must be allowed to express these emotions if you are going to build rapport and trust.
- **Identify and challenge, in a nurturing way, the use of over generalization terms like, "everybody", "always", "everything", "nothing"**, etc.
- **Gently work to refute the caller's self-attacking phrases** such as "this is my fault", or "I'm to blame for everything". Help build a case that shows their worth/value
- **Pick up the pace of questioning** over a period of time. If you do not receive answers to your open-ended questions, ask more specific questions.
- **Discuss real-world issues** rather than abstract principles. Topics such as "the world is a terrible place" may be gently challenged by asking questions specific to the caller or their life, but should be based on real, not general or imagined issues. "What has happened to you that makes you feel the world is a terrible place"? "When did this happen?" may be questions that require the caller to state specifics. Explore the caller's beliefs.
- **If the caller makes reference to suicide, work to get them to agree to a contract** or postponement of a suicide attempt. Remain alert to indicators of a potential suicide-by-cop (SbC).
- **Gently challenge the caller to evaluate assumptions** the caller may be making about their feelings of depression. "How often do you feel depressed?" "When did you last feel better than you do now?" Identify and challenge in a nurturing way the use of over generalization terms like, everybody, always, everything, nothing, etc. Gently work to refute the caller's self-attacking phrases such as "this is my fault" or "I'm to blame for everything", etc. Help build a case that shows his/her worth and value.

- **Use mirroring to reflect back feelings**, even feelings of anger, resentment, and pain. This tells the caller that it's okay to express those feelings to you - that you can handle them. BEWARE OF YOUR OWN EMOTIONS when dealing with a caller expressing anger.
- **Be ready to accept those emotions without reacting in a punitive or threatening manner**.

Paranoid Schizophrenic Individuals

It may take you as a Call Taker/dispatcher a few minutes to begin to discern that you are dealing with a person who is delusional. Some schizophrenics have such vivid delusions or hallucinations that they can describe them in great detail. These individuals may come across as being completely out of touch with reality. They may have delusions involving government conspiracies, or other paranoid thoughts. The paranoid schizophrenic may be generally suspicious of others and may be difficult to build a rapport with. They may report delusions or hallucinations and feel threatened when dealing with others. They may believe they are being persecuted from a number of sources, including the police. Some of these people may be involved in stalking incidents where they are convinced that they have a "relationship" with a targeted individual. These persons may be argumentative, disoriented or confused and their fear of others may be an underlying emotion. Remember that they often operate from a position of extreme fear.

Three main characteristics: Disorganized thinking; disturbed perceptions; inappropriate emotions and actions (FBI).

Disorganized thinking:
- Delusions – false beliefs often of persecution or grandeur, despite evidence to the contrary
- Word Salad: Thoughts spill out in no logical order; jumping from one idea to another

Disturbed perceptions:
- **Hallucinations – sensory experiences without known external cause**
  - Usually auditory (command voices)
  - May involve any of the five senses

Inappropriate emotions and actions:
- Laughs at funerals; cries when others laugh, anger for no reason, or no affect
- Performs senseless, compulsive acts – rocking, rubbing arm, twirling hair, etc.

Techniques that may be used:

- **Use a firm, calm, evenly modulated non-judgmental** tone of voice. Be respectful and polite.
- **Do not argue or attempt to correct their delusions**, listen, without criticism to their perception. To them, the hallucination or delusion is real, by arguing or challenging their perception, you confirm that they have a reason to be paranoid-you really *are* against them.
- **Ask them to describe the situation,** use paraphrasing techniques that are non-judgmental or critical of their description.
- **Focus negotiations on problem solving**. Gently re-focus on real, not imagined problems (McMains/Mullins, 2001) without criticism.
- **Allow rapport to build over time**, do not try to rush or force the process.
- **Anticipate angry responses**-respond by requesting more information, clarification and by paraphrasing responses. Attempt to gain focus on a real issue or question and guide the subject through to a response, refocusing on the subject as needed.
- **Address the subject's fears**, providing constant reassurance.
- **Acknowledge their need to feel safe.**

SUICIDAL CALLERS

Background

Suicide accounts for more than 30,000 deaths a year in the United States. It is the 8th leading cause of death in this country. There are more suicide deaths than homicides. U.S. suicide rates are average for industrialized nations but generally higher than for developing countries

Gender

- Men are much more likely to kill themselves as women
- Men account for 80% of all suicides
- Women are more likely than men to attempt suicide. More than 50% of suicide attempts are made by women; however, men use more lethal means and succeed in killing themselves more often.
- 73% of adolescent suicides are committed by male adolescents (15-24)

Age

- The elderly have the highest suicide rate. 75-84 year olds have the highest rate of any age group at 23.5 per 100,000.
- Elderly white males over the age of 65 have a suicide rate of 42.7 per 100,000. Non-white males in the same age group have a suicide rate of 16.7 per 100,000.
- Women over the age of 65 have a suicide rate of 6.0 per 100K
- Suicide is the 3rd leading cause of death among adolescents. The rate of suicide among adolescents is climbing. In 1950 the rate for persons ages 14-15 was 4.5 per 100K. In 1990, the rate was 13.2 per 100K.

Ethnicity

- White males account for 70% of all suicides.
- Non-whites generally have lower suicide rates than whites.
- Adolescents/young adults have a lower suicide rate than white adult males but only 30%-40% lower.
- Some Native Americans in certain tribes have much higher suicide rates, particularly among male adolescents, some reaching rates of 44 per 100,000.

Myths about Suicide

Myth: If you ask a person about his suicidal intentions, you'll encourage him to kill himself.

> Fact: The opposite may be true. By asking someone directly about their intentions you may lower their anxiety level and act as a deterrent to suicidal behavior by encouraging the ventilation of pent-up emotions through a frank discussion of their problems.

Myth: If someone attempts suicide, she will always entertain suicidal thoughts.

> Fact: Most people who are suicidal are so only for a very brief period once in their lives. If the person receives the proper support and assistance, she will probably never be suicidal again. Only about 10% of people who attempt suicide later kill themselves.

Myth: People who talk about suicide rarely do it.

> Fact: Most persons who commit suicide have given some verbal clues or warnings of their intentions.

Myth: The suicidal person who wants to die feels there is no turning back.

> Fact: Suicidal people are often ambivalent about dying and will often seek help immediately after attempting to harm themselves.

Pre-Suicidal Situations

- Sense of hopelessness and helplessness that may be brought on by:
    - Loss of a significant other
    - Loss of employment
    - Loss of health
    - Financial loss
    - Loss of self esteem
    - Often more than one loss may occur within a short period of time
- Social isolation, deep loneliness
- Illness and pain
- Change in lifestyle (retirement, empty nest)
- Unfulfilled or unrealistic expectations

Behavioral Pre-Incident Indicators

Pre-attempt indicators may include:

- Giving away personal items
- Writing a note or verbal statements
- Test firing a weapon
- Withdrawal from family and friends
- Suddenly stop participating in enjoyable activities
- Changes in eating, sleeping, sex life
- Statements about hopelessness or helplessness

Call Takers face several challenges with suicidal callers. They may need an EMS and law enforcement response. They may not want to tell you where they are. They may be looking for a reason not to commit suicide. They may tell you of some crime or act they have committed that is causing them to be suicidal.

There are agencies and personnel who are trained to handle suicide intervention. However, a general referral may not be the appropriate action by a 9-1-1 Call Taker if an immediate threat exists. The job of the Call Taker is to buy time until responders or assistance can reach them.

While it is necessary to collect the basic information, as with all calls, the tone with which a dispatcher deals with a suicidal caller may be as important as the questions s/he asks. It is essential that these callers be treated with empathy and respect. Callers who say they are suicidal should always be taken seriously.

Ask open-ended questions: Why are you feeling this way? What has happened today to make you feel this way? Allow the suicidal person to vent, let them talk. Listen for clues as to what is happening and attempt to assess immediate risk to the suicidal person or others.

Use active listening techniques such as paraphrasing, emotional labeling, mirroring, effective pauses, minimal encouragers, etc.

Suicide by Cop

Suicide by cop has become more prevalent in recent years. This occurs when suicidal individuals choose to use law enforcement officers as their mechanism for suicide, often making life threatening movements toward officers in an effort to have them kill him or kill some of them and himself at the same time.

Suicide-by-Cop (SbC) Indicators:

The following represents a behavioral profile of a potential SbC victim and by itself should not be utilized in classifying an individual as suicidal:

- (He) **is often a member of a lower socioeconomic class who has integrated aggressive, other-oriented behavior as a problem-solving model**. He may seek to destroy himself because of depression, desperation, and/or a need to punish society by his death for the "wrongs" it has committed against him.

  Because of his aggressive life style, poor self-concept and individual social standards, he may not view death at his own hands (true suicide) as a socially acceptable method of death; therefore, he may confront law enforcement officers in a way that he knows will require them to use deadly force. He may use any means necessary including the killing of an officer or an innocent bystander to bring about his own death in a way that he believes will allow society to perceive him as a victim of others, not of himself

- **If prior to his confrontation with authorities, he has just killed a significant other in his life**, especially if the victim was a child or the subject's mother.

- **As the subject of self-initiated hostage or barricade situation, he refuses to negotiate with authorities**

  ☐ He demands to be killed by the police
  ☐ He sets a deadline for authorities to kill him
  ☐ He has recently learned he has a terminal or life-threatening illness
  ☐ He indicates an elaborate plan for his death, one that takes prior thought and preparation
  ☐ He says he'll only surrender, in person, to the person in charge
  ☐ He indicates he wants to "go out in a big way". He appears to be looking for a manly/macho way to die
  ☐ He presents no demands that include his escape or freedom
  ☐ He provides authorities with a verbal will
  ☐ He has recently given away money or personal possessions
  ☐ He has a criminal record indicating past assaultive behavior
  ☐ He has recently experienced one or more traumatic events in his life that affect him, his family, or his career
  ☐ He expresses feelings of hopelessness or helplessness

Although the list is not all-inclusive, the presence of one or more of these indicators may help to identify a person who is possibly depressed and or/suicidal. A combination of these indicators should be considered evidence of a possible SbC, especially if this individual confronts the authorities in a way that could bring about his own death.

The guilt hypothesis would suggest that he believes society's hatred for his offense- and there himself- will be satisfied only by his own violent death at the hands of the authorities. The SbC may subconsciously agree with the norms of society-norms that he has internalized within his own social consciousness, but against which he has consistently fought when present as the standard by other social groups. The individual and his sense of self-worth thus become a legitimate target for aggression.

Two or more of these may help identify a person who is suicidal. A combination of these indicators may be evidence of a person contemplating SbC.

General Suicide Risk Assessment

When dealing with suicidal callers, it is recommended that if you have any doubt about what the person may be hinting at, that you *ask*. It is okay to ask someone if they are thinking about hurting themselves. Almost all the information available today about dealing with suicidal persons says to bring the subject out in the open. You will not "plant the seed" of suicide by asking about it. The term "risk assessment" is used here *simply as a tool* to allow the Call Taker to ask more questions for clarification of the problem and to provide that information to responders or mental health workers. It is a way of gathering information to assist those who respond to help the caller.

The three most important concerns on assessing risk are: ***Plan, Means, and Intent.***

First, does the person have a plan and what is it? The more thought out a plan is, the higher potential for a suicide attempt.

The most important piece of the assessment deals with the means. In the plan, what means will the person employ to kill himself? The more immediately lethal the means, the higher the risk is of a successful suicide. Does the "means" leave room for rescue (i.e., overdose) or not (i.e., gunshot)?

The person's intent deals with his/her willingness to actually harm him/herself. It has been said that the person who has made a final determination to kill him/herself has already done it. There are cases where callers who have the plan, means and serious intent will call only to ask for a public safety response so their families won't find them. In cases like this, there may be nothing you can say that will dissuade them, even if they agree to stay on the phone long enough for you to attempt to assist them. One of the most important rules in dealing with potentially suicidal people is to understand that each person is responsible for his or her own life decisions. In this case it is all about *them* and their choices over which you have no control.

San Francisco Suicide Prevention (the oldest crisis line in the U.S.) uses the acronym P.L.A.I.D. P.A.L.S. as a risk assessment tool for gathering *additional* information beyond plan*, means, and intent*. The more of these descriptions you can check off, the higher the risk may be to the subject.

Plan-do they have one?
Lethality-what is it, and is it lethal?
Availability-or access-do they have the means with which to carry it out?
Illness-do they have a physical or mental illness?
Depression? Is it chronic or has a specific incident triggered it?
Previous attempts- when, how many times have they attempted? By what method?
Alone? Are they alone or do they have a support system? Are they alone now?
Loss? Has there been a death, loss of job, relationship or self-esteem?
Substance Abuse or use-have they or do they use alcohol, drugs, or medication? Is it chronic? Are they under the influence now?

Also consider the tone of the conversation. Pay particular attention if the caller sounds like they are talking about the 2 H's-**hopelessness and helplessness**.

How You May Help

Ask the person if they are thinking about hurting themselves. Bring the subject out into the open. Discuss it freely without showing shock, disapproval or being judgmental. Ask them why they want to die and what the advantages are to dying. Next, ask what the advantages are to living. Emphasize the good aspects of their life.

Inquire about their medical history. Ask if they have ever suffered from depression. Clinical depression is common. As many as one of every five people will have a serious episode of depression some time in their life. Suicidal thoughts are a common part of clinical depression. Many people feel that they are on their way to becoming crazy. Emphasize that depression is an illness and that there may be a strong medical component to their symptoms. Clinicians know that certain brain chemicals are not at their normal level of functioning and that certain parts of the brain are not using oxygen and sugar normally.

Focus on getting the person to express feelings – It may not be a good time to negotiate if feelings are extremely strong or intense. Assist the subject by helping to reduce intensity of his/her feelings (McMaines/Mullins).

Determine motivation- why do they want to die? What was the precipitating event that brought this on? What does the person want to prove, or whom do they want to hurt?

Talk openly about the finality of death – as a permanent solution to a temporary condition (whatever is happening today will not be the same in the future). Stress that suicide is only one of many alternatives. The person has choices (some control).

Allow verbal venting- to help redirect anger away from themselves.

Instill hope. Hopelessness predicts suicide. Reassure the person that people with depression do get better. Emphasize that there is medical treatment available for people suffering from a wide variety of depression-related illnesses.

Make a contract with the caller. If you believe that the risk of suicide is high, try to make a verbal agreement with the person to agree to talk to responders before they follow through with the suicide. Emphasize that they can choose to commit suicide at a later time if they want, but for now you would like them to agree to at least talk to your responders.

Things to Avoid

Do not be too aggressive – as telecommunicators, we are expected to ask questions and note responses for responding units. However, suicidal people sometimes feel they have little control as it is, trying to force them to provide information may only exacerbate these feelings. In addition, as dispatchers, we may feel hopeless and impotent when dealing with them and may respond by becoming somewhat belligerent, such as demanding that they want to live, etc.

Avoid moralizing –It is ineffective to tell a suicidal person that their thoughts of suicide are wrong or against God's will. Equally ineffective may be your attempts to remind them of their obligations to family and society. The suicidal person carries a heavy load of guilt and moral arguments only add to this burden.

Do not try too hard to reassure the person – You may be tempted to rescue the potential suicide by telling them that life is worth living and that they are important. These efforts may succeed only in making the individual feel rejected, misunderstood and dismissed. The suicidal person does not feel life is meaningful or like himself at that point in time.

Don't judge them, display anger toward them, provoke guilt or discount their feelings.

Suicide by Overdose:

In the case of ingestion of medication or other potentially toxic substances, attempt to determine:

- What was taken?
- If a medication, what dosage (10 mgs.)?
- How many or how much?
- How long ago?

- Was anything else, such as alcohol, ingested with it?
- Are they showing any effects of the ingestion?

Other Questions for Suicidal Callers:

Ask if the caller has every attempted suicide in the past. If yes, ask them by what method. The more lethal a previous attempt was the higher risk the caller may be. Something you say may agitate the caller. If this happens, change the subject. In dealing with a suicidal caller, your greatest asset is time. Time will allow you to get assistance to them, hopefully before they can harm themselves. Some callers may have already made up their mind and are calling just to let someone know. There are those callers who no matter how you attempt to deal with them, cannot be rescued.

For callers threatening suicide by firearm, gather as much information as possible for the safety not only of the caller, but also of responders and others that may be endangered. If the caller will stay on the telephone, you may be able to assist responders when instructed to do so by asking the caller to put the weapon down or step out to talk to the responders. Your ability to establish rapport with this caller may be the most important component of having the caller cooperate with responders when they arrive.

For callers who have family or other persons with them, you will need to assess the potential threat to these other individuals. Determine who is with them. Where are these individuals? Is there any immediate threat to them? Do they know the caller is suicidal?

Has the caller been drinking or using drugs? This may make their behavior less predictable or more difficult to deal with. Make sure all information about drug or alcohol use is relayed to the responders.

What is the caller’s attitude? Are they agitated? Do they sound depressed? Are they communicative? Are they emotional, crying or hysterical? The caller’s state of mind may determine how you respond to them. As with any hysterical or out of control caller, you may need to employ persistent repetition or other techniques to get the caller to respond to you. A caller who is crying may require assurance delivered in a calming and sympathetic tone. Each caller will be different and may require the use of different techniques accordingly.

Tips for handling Suicidal Callers:

- Reassure the caller they did the right thing by calling
- Listen to the caller; they may just want to talk
- Let them know that you are going to help them
- Obtain as much information as possible
- Treat all suicide threats seriously
- Obtain all pertinent information, particularly about weapons or their intention to commit "suicide by cop"
- DO NOT bring your own prejudices about the situation into the call

Hearing and Speech Impaired Callers

Many of the same principles apply to the hearing and/or speech impaired caller as with any other call. Often, asking the caller to please repeat their information will be a good course of action. Usually, a person with a speech or hearing impairment will take direction from you on the best way to get information from them (repeat, spell, etc.). Do not raise your voice to a hearing impaired caller-this only distorts your voice; it does not help them hear. As with other callers, hearing and speech impaired persons have valuable information to offer. They must be treated with courtesy and professionalism while processing their call efficiently.

Tips for hearing or speech impaired callers:

- DO use your normal tone of voice
- DO take your cues from them (to speak louder or deeper)
- DO keep questioning simple
- DO be patient
- DO NOT yell at a hearing impaired caller

HYSTERICAL CALLER

It is rare that a caller is truly hysterical. In most cases, a skilled Call Taker can get through to a caller enough to have them provide information. However, there are times when callers cannot calm themselves enough to answer questions. In these circumstances, the Call Taker must take immediate control of the call. The Call Taker's tone of voice ***must remain calm***, **firm, and well-modulated**. The Call Taker must understand that most hysterical callers can be dealt with if the proper techniques are used. This will allow the Call Taker to obtain the necessary information, even if extensive details cannot be obtained.

Hysteria is a type of regression. The Call Taker must not respond using hysteria or elevated voice levels, threatening commands, etc. Respond with the idea that the primary focus is to obtain information and assist the caller with their emergency.

Rules of Persistent Repetition:

- **Firm, calm**, authoritative well-modulated voice
- State a ***simple* question** phrase or command
- **Repeat** this question, phrase or command
- **Exactly** the same way each time until a response is received

Tips:

- Use ***persistent repetition***: In a firm, professional voice, repeat a simple phrase over and over, using ***exactly the same wording each time*** until the caller begins to respond to the questioning. Phrases such as "What is happening?" "Where are you?" "I'm here to help, listen to my questions".
- Keep the questions short and simple.
- Be cautious about using the phrase "calm down" at all. This phrase may agitate the caller even further.
- Listen to the caller. They may be providing important information, although they are yelling.
- Listen for background noise.
- Reassure the caller.
- Encourage the caller to take a breath and tell you what is happening.
- Ask for their name and use it with them. "Joan, I'm here to help, what is happening?"
- DO NOT hang up or give up on a caller who is having difficulty calming down.
- DO NOT take their harsh, demanding words or tone of voice personally.
- DO NOT respond with threats. Phrases such as "I can't/won't help you if you don't calm down" Or "If you don't calm down, I'm hanging up" don't work and they are not courteous.
- DO NOT yell back at the caller.

If all communication attempts fail and you cannot get an intelligible response from the caller, you must depend on information from the ANI/ALI system or ask the telephone company to conduct a trace on the line to find out where the call is coming from. (Consult agency policy).

Angry, Hostile or Abusive Callers:

When handling a call from an angry, hostile or abusive caller, the Call Taker must first remain professional. Although it may be unpleasant to stay on the telephone with such a caller, it does not remove the responsibility the Call Taker has to obtain information and provide needed assistance. Also understand, *it isn't personal*, even if the caller tries to make it sound that way.

Tips:

- Maintain a calm, professional voice tone
- Consider the use of silence until the caller calms down or is able to speak rationally
- Remember the primary focus is to obtain information and provide assistance
- Use the "persistent repetition" technique as appropriate with a respectful and polite tone of voice
- Remember that angry, hostile or abusive callers are entitled to courteous, professional service, just as any other caller
- DO NOT become angry and hostile in response to the caller

- DO NOT threaten the caller by saying you will not help them if they do not stop being abusive

Some agencies have policies allowing disconnection from an abusive caller. Once all information has been obtained and the Call Taker informs the caller what will happen with the call, the Call Taker may be allowed to disconnect the call.

NON-ENGLISH SPEAKING CALLERS

Taking a call from a person that speaks little or no English can be challenging. Often times, the caller will understand and speak some English. In these cases, you can try to speak to the caller slowly and clearly and ask that they do the same. In some cases, this method may be enough to obtain basic call information, although the caller will probably not be able to provide detailed answers to your questions in English.

This may be a situation where you must depend on E-9-1-1 information or have the line traced. Ask the caller if there is anyone there who speaks English. Often, children who attend school can interpret for their family members.

Many people can count from 1-10 in a foreign language. Using this, you may be able to obtain a telephone number or even an address.

A simple phrase book for Call Takers to use to ask questions may be used, but Beware! If you ask the questions in a foreign language from a phrase book, the caller may answer them in the foreign language and you may not be able to understand them.

Sometimes, a Call Taker may be able to do little more than ask callers to repeat themselves until they can understand words or phrases being used.

Language services

- Some agencies have access to a language line service. One popular service is AT&T Language Line. The cost for this is a monthly subscription plus a per-minute charge for use. Language Line provides interpreting service for over 240 languages. When a call from a non-English speaker is received, the Call Taker attempts to determine the language spoken. The call is then conferenced with language line. The Language Line operator will then connect you with an interpreter. This entire process normally takes less than one minute. The telephone number for AT&T Language Line is: 1-800-752-6096. You can call their demonstration line to hear what a typical call to them would sound like. The demonstration number is: 1-800-821-0301. When using this or other services, the Call Taker must ask the caller what language they speak.

Tips:

- Process calls from non-English speakers in an efficient, courteous manner.
- Speak clearly and slowly
- DO NOT speak louder in an effort to be understood

ELDERLY CALLERS

Call Takers will take many calls from elderly callers. Dealing with an older person does not necessarily mean there will be problems taking the call, but you may be faced with the need to use different methods of communication with them.

Elderly callers are often hesitant about accessing emergency services. This means there may be a time lapse because they have spent time thinking about whether or not to call.

An elderly caller may be very apologetic about calling. They may be unsure they did the right thing.

Some techniques for dealing with the elderly caller:

- Speak to them in a professional courteous manner
- Reassure them they did the right thing by calling
- Remember that some elderly people may have speech or hearing impairment from medical problems or age
- Address elderly people as Mr., Mrs., Miss, or Ms. rather than by their first name
- DO NOT continue to ask an elderly female her name if she has given her name as Mrs. Her-husband's-name, unless it is necessary
- DO NOT shout or be abrupt with elderly callers

CHILD CALLERS

Much of the information you receive from a child caller will depend on their age and communication skill. One of the most important communication methods you can use with a child caller is to ask questions in a way they can understand and if they don't understand, ask it in a different way. Be patient while they are telling you "their story". Attempt to find out if they are alone or if an adult is present. You may want to ask to speak to the adult. In some cases, the child will give information that is more detailed.

If they cannot provide the address, use some of the previously outlined techniques to help them find it (mail, name of people who live in house they are at, etc.). You may have to have the line traced or depend on ANI/ALI information. You can also ask what playground they are near or what schools they go to, what friends live nearby. All of these are clues to where they are.

Tips for child callers:

- Ask for, and call them by name
- Give them your name if you think it will build rapport
- Reassure them that you will help them
- Talk in a simple manner, yet do not be condescending
- Listen carefully

CALLERS UNDER DURESS

In dealing with a caller whom you suspect is being threatened while speaking to you, proceed very cautiously, keeping in mind the welfare of the caller.

When you receive a call and the caller sounds unusually hesitant or abruptly stops speaking, your next question should be, "***can you speak freely?***" If they answer "no" or don't answer at all, ask if there is someone else there, or could another person be listening in on the call. Ask if someone is hurting or threatening them. Ask questions that can be answered with a yes or no. They may not be able to give you the location. ***Confirm the ANI/ALI display*** if available to attempt to confirm an address. If that is not possible, try techniques such as advising the caller you are going to start counting numbers 0-9. When you get to the first digit in the address, have them respond by saying yes or pressing a number on the telephone. Do this until you have all numbers in the address. The street name can be done the same way with the alphabet or with numbers.

The caller may have to act as if they are speaking with a friend or relative. They may refer to you as "mom" or by a friend's name. Go along with this, asking the questions and interpreting their answers.

If the suspect picks up the telephone, you will have to quickly decide what to do. Your agency may have a policy that you will hang up immediately. Other agencies may have a policy that the Call Taker will try to talk with the suspect, while sending units.

Tips for callers under duress:

- Learn to recognize a call from someone in danger – Listen to voice inflection or hesitation
- Try to obtain information from them, even if they cannot speak freely

- Be patient with the caller
- Listen for an extension phone to be picked up
- Listen to background noise
- Let them know what you are doing to help them
- Keep the safety of the caller in mind. You may tell them that if they have to hang up for their own safety, do so. You may ask them if they have to leave the telephone, to lay the telephone down
- DO NOT give up on the caller

THE CHATTY/LONELY CALLER

You may have people who call on a regular basis. History may indicate that these calls have not warranted a response, but rather the caller is lonely or just wants to chat. These calls must be dealt with in a serious, professional manner, but without getting into a long and involved conversation that distracts from other work.

No matter how many calls you have received from the same person, each must be screened for details. Lonely and chatty callers have emergencies too!

Tips for Chatty or Lonely Callers:

- Remain professional and courteous with the caller
- Know your community resources so you can make a referral to a social service agency if needed
- Take each call seriously
- DO NOT dismiss calls just because you have taken many calls from the same person that did not need a response
- DO NOT prioritize their calls for assistance any differently than other calls of the same type

PRANK CALLERS

These types of callers may pose a danger to the community because they elicit emergency responses without need. In doing so, they risk the health, safety, and welfare of responding units and take away from others that may have a genuine need for assistance.

It is sometimes difficult to determine if a call is a prank. These calls should be handled seriously. Handling a call in a less serious manner could place the agency in a position of liability. For some calls, the Call Taker may suspect it is a prank because of the demeanor of the caller. Unless you can confirm the call is a prank, enter a call for service and inform responders of the call and your suspicions, if appropriate.

If you suspect the call is false, attempt to obtain information on the caller if possible. If the caller is a child, you may want to ask them if they are playing on the telephone. They may admit to not having a reason for the call.

Some prank callers access 9-1-1 just to yell obscenities or tie up the telephone lines. Some agencies have a policy that these calls will warrant a response by law enforcement.

If you are using an Enhanced 9-1-1 system, all pertinent information from ANI and ALI should be obtained and forwarded to the responding agency.

CONFIRM that help is not needed. The person answering the phone may not be aware of an emergency.

Tips for Prank Callers:

- Handle and process their calls as if they are real
- Advise your responders if you suspect a prank call
- Be polite if you call back the number, as the person answering the telephone may not be aware of the prank call
- DO NOT discount the calls until it is determined an emergency does not exist

- DO NOT threaten the caller with phrases like "hang up or I'll have an officer arrest you"
- Use ANI to call back and to show skeptical parents or guardians that a 9-1-1 call was placed from that number

INTOXICATED OR NARCOTICS IMPAIRED CALLERS

These calls should be handled just as professionally as any other. Do not bring your own feelings or prejudices about alcohol or drugs into the call. A respectful tone and persistent repetition used appropriately may help the impaired caller focus on your questions.

Listen to the caller carefully and determine what assistance is needed.

Not all people who seem intoxicated are. Some people may sound intoxicated when they have a medical problem or speech impediment. Diabetes, stroke, cerebral palsy, and other medical problems may make a patient slur his or her speech.

Tips for chemically impaired callers:

- Be patient with the caller
- Determine what assistance is needed
- Keep in mind that intoxicated people may need medical assistance because of the alcohol or drugs although they may also be reporting a police problem
- DO NOT purposely attempt to confuse or make fun of the chemically impaired caller, it is not professional and may affect the safety of responders who may have to contact this individual
- DO NOT bring your own prejudice into dealing with this type of caller

COURTESY IS OUR BUSINESS

All throughout this chapter, the underlying theme of call taking is COURTESY. Call Takers should never forget the primary focus; to obtain information and provide needed assistance. When the focus becomes the Call Taker controlling the call in a rude, commanding fashion, the chance of getting needed information is diminished.

9-1-1 services are the ultimate customer service oriented business.

PROCESSING CALL FROM DEAF, HARD OF HEARING, OR SPEECH IMPAIRED CALLERS

Some hearing and speech impaired people use a Teletype (TTY) (the deaf community's preferred term) or Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD) machine to make and receive telephone calls. Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), all communications centers are required to have a TTY. Specific information on TTY will be discussed later in this unit.

Introduction-This information was used by permission from *the 9-1-1 Operator's Guide* provided by the Washington State 9-1-1 TTY Education Program through the Community Service Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Seattle, WA.

In July of 1990 the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was signed. This Act required compliance by state and local governments by January 1992. One requirement is that all public agencies that provide telephone emergency services are required to be accessible to people who have hearing and/or speech disabilities.

The ADA states "telephone emergency services, including 9-1-1 services, shall provide direct access to individuals who use TTY's and computer modems". While each agency is free to determine the type of equipment they feel is the best suited for their needs, there must be equipment in place that is able to respond to TTY calls immediately. The equipment must be maintained so that it is functioning at all times.

Who is the TTY user?

Many different people use the TTY for a variety of reasons. It is important to understand this in order to be able to respond quickly and adapt to your caller's needs. The person calling may be deaf, deaf-blind, hard of hearing, speech impaired, late deafened, or even hard of hearing. As with any caller, the TTY caller may be associated with any number of different socioeconomic levels, educational backgrounds, and cultural groups. While they will have in common the fact that they utilize the TTY, their language skills may range from strong English, to American Sign Language (ASL), to minimal language skills (MLS).

The following statistics further demonstrate the varying hearing disorders in the United States:

- More than 28 million Americans have a hearing loss; 80 percent of those affected have irreversible and permanent hearing damage. More than 1/3 of the U.S. population has a significant hearing impairment by age 65.
- Approximately 2 million people are profoundly deaf.
- One of every 1,000 infants is born totally deaf.
- At least 11 million children are deaf or have a communication disorder.
- One of every 22 infants has hearing problems.
- Genetic factors are known to cause over 50 percent of all cases of severe childhood deafness.
- The average age of diagnosis of hearing loss is close to age 3, thus impeding opportunities for normal language development in the child.
- Sensorineural damage (damage to the hair cells and cochlea caused by genetics or exposure to noise) is the largest, single form of hearing loss affecting 17 million Americans.
- At least 15 percent of the U.S. population is affected by tinnitus (ringing or roaring sounds in the ear). Persons over age 50 are twice as likely to have tinnitus.
- (These statistics are compiled by the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders, National Institutes of Health as reported in the April 1989 National Strategic Research Plan).

Many TTY users who are speech disabled or who as adults become deaf will use grammatically correct English sentences. However, some TTY users will type English within the framework of American Sign Language (ASL), which is their first language.

Telephone Relay Services

Another method that a 9-1-1 center may receive requests for emergency services from the deaf or hard of hearing is through a Telephone Relay Service. The ADA of 1990 requires that a system of Telephone Relay Services (TRS) be maintained throughout the United States. While this is not a desirable method for contacting emergency services and not encouraged in the deaf community, there may be reasons that a call will be received in this manner so it is important to be prepared to respond.

Telephone companies provide these services throughout the country, which are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. There are several concerns that exist when this service is used for contact with emergency services, the first of which is that the caller has dialed the service and then the operator connects them to the 9-1-1 center. Therefore there is no ANI/ALI display available, and it must quickly be determined that the caller's address does lie within a jurisdiction of the PSAP that was dialed by the relay service.

Having a third party relay information between the TTY caller and the telecommunicator results in a delay due to the necessity of passing information through the operator, who then passes it along to the other party either through voice or TTY. In addition, the caller and operator may use either **voice carryover (VCO)** or **hearing carryover (HCO). Sometimes the TTY caller uses their own voice to speak with the telecommunicator rather than type, but reads the reply on their TTY screen. This is using VCO**. **The HCO method is normally used for a speech-impaired person, who will listen with a telephone receiver rather than reading the TTY.** Their reply is then typed on the TTY, and the operator will verbally relay this response to the other party. When using a relay service *speak to the relay operator as if he/she is the caller.* Avoid third tense, as it is confusing to the relay operator who is "invisible" in this process. For example, to obtain the address, ask the relay operator "At what address do you need help", in the first party to the caller, not the operator.

When receiving a relay call it should be handled through the relay operator rather than requesting the caller to hang up and dial 9-1-1, unless there is a specific need for such a request.

Equipment

The large Western Union teletypewriters were the first form of TTY equipment. Today TTY has become the universal and most culturally preferred term to indicate the device that provides the same functions as a telephone, except that the conversation is transmitted and received as text instead of sound (also known as a Text Telephone). A TTY can send and receive text from another TTY, just as a telephone does with sound. However, a TTY and telephone cannot communicate directly with each other. Some pay phones are equipped with TTY's, and computers may be equipped with modems and software that send signals to TTY's.

The term TDD (telecommunication device for the deaf) may be used interchangeably with TTY but TTY is the term used by the deaf community.

A **TB** (**TeleBraille**) machine may also be used when the caller is deaf-blind. The TB produces a printout in Braille instead of ink. Deaf-blind callers will need additional time in order to read the Braille or focus on a large visual display. Since we do not always know which type of equipment the caller is using to place their call, knowing that the caller may be using the TB helps in understanding that it may be necessary to type slower with frequent pauses to give the caller time to read, and to prevent their machine from becoming jammed.

With a TTY, the conversation is displayed on a screen and/or a printout. While it is becoming possible with some equipment to interrupt while one party is typing, with most equipment in use today there is no way to interrupt. It is important to be familiar with acceptable abbreviations and terminology so that conversations can be kept to a minimum period when obtaining needed details for the appropriate response.

Troubleshooting

If there is a garbled message being received over the TTY, several things can be checked:

- Verify that the acoustic coupler connection is secure (the rubberized cups on the TTY that hold the phone receiver)
- Hit the space bar or letter keys while receiving
- Turn the power off and then back on
- Ask the other party to repeat
- Switch to other equipment if possible
- If unable to determine problem, follow your agency procedures for open line calls

If there is no display on the TTY screen:

- Check the power connections and cables
- Check on/off setting
- If on battery power, check the battery energy level
- Check the telephone seating in the acoustic coupler

American Sign Language (ASL)

American Sign Language is a native language for most of the Deaf Community, and a second language for many. ASL was recognized as a language in the 1960s and today is considered the **third major language used in the United States**, after English and Spanish. It is a visual language without any written form, and is based on signs, facial expressions, body language, and utilization of space. ASL uses a visual grammar, which has its own rules for grammatical order, sentence structure, and references to time.

Content words are important in ASL, rather than the articles, prepositions, and pronouns that are utilized in the English language. TTY users fluent in ASL may have difficulty in reporting an emergency, especially when they find themselves in a stressful situation. They may find it hard to translate ASL, a language based on signs, facial expressions, body language, and utilization of space, into an English-based TTY conversation.

To handle a 9-1-1 TTY call the Call Taker needs to be able to communicate with any TTY user regardless of his or her English skills. To prevent any miscommunication or misunderstanding it is important to be simple and direct. *If the caller does not understand questions, it may be necessary to rephrase them*. If you do not understand, be sure to have the caller verify any details that are not clear. As with any call, initiate a response even if you are unable to determine what the request is while letting the caller know you are sending help.

When possible it is helpful to remain on the line with the TTY caller so that the caller can be updated, since a deaf caller may not know when help has arrived. When possible, it may also be helpful to remain on the phone to assist field units once they arrive by relaying information for them over the TTY.

Hard of Hearing and Late Deafened Callers

Some callers will use the regular telephone when placing 9-1-1 calls, although they have difficulty hearing the Call Taker. If there is a voice volume amplifier on the handset, it may help to increase the volume. Speaking loudly or shouting on the telephone many times distorts the voice, which can hamper the ability of the Call Taker to effectively communicate with the caller. It is more effective to speak slowly and pronounce each word clearly.

TTY Etiquette

It is important to feel as comfortable in communicating via TTY equipment as with the telephone system in use at your agency. Sometimes it is possible to contact adjoining agencies to set up practice calls to help build proficiency. It can also be effective to make contact with TTY users in the local area who can also participate in practice calls. This is also helpful in introducing the deaf community to 9-1-1.

Many ASL users have excellent English skills, yet there are English words that will not be understood by some callers when ASL is their first language. If procedure dictates that specific language be used when communicating with 9-1-1 callers, there may be some difficulty with communication. For example, pre-arrival or CPR instructions that are often written for emergency medical dispatch guidelines indicate specific language be used. If allowed the flexibility to modify some words, more effective communication can take place with TTY callers. For instance, a TTY caller may not recognize the word "conscious", yet the word "awake" may obtain the needed information.

The following are some examples that can be used to solicit needed information:

What is the address of the patient (or address where it happened)?
Where you **Q** Where happen **Q**

What is the problem?
What happen **Q** Happen what **Q**

What is the telephone number you are calling from?
Phone nbr what **Q** What is phone nbr **Q**

What is your name?
Name what **Q** What ur name **Q**

Is the person conscious?
Person awake **Q** Eyes open, look at you **Q** Can talk to you **Q**

The following are basic rules for TTY etiquette to assist in completing a TTY call.

- **Treat any silent call as a TTY call, and don't hang up until you have ruled out the possibility that it may be a TTY call**.
- Handle a TTY call as you would any other call for service from the public.
- Take your cue from the TTY user when to use standard or simplified English.
- Remember that in most cases only one person can type at a time.
- Keep questions direct and simple.
- Allow the TTY user to respond to questions one at a time.
- Do not worry about using punctuation marks.
- Avoid using English idioms, complex sentences and uncommon vocabulary. Try to use **place** instead of **location**, **help** instead of **rescue, and send** instead of **dispatch.**
- Be certain to inform the TTY caller before placing them on hold if this becomes necessary. Otherwise, they will believe they have been disconnected.

TTY Abbreviations

Some abbreviations are necessary to know and use when communicating with the TTY caller. Be sure to become familiar with these, and if necessary put together a "cheat sheet" to have handy when needed. The most commonly used abbreviations are:

GA	Go Ahead – remember to type GA at the end of your turn to indicate to the TTY user that it is their turn to type.
GA SK	About to hang up.
SK	Ending the conversation (stop keying) – before hanging up wait for the caller to respond with SK.
SKSK	Hanging up now.
XXXX	Use to indicate a spelling mistake, rather than backspacing to correct any error, and then just continue with the corrected text.
Q	Use the letter Q at the end of a question instead of typing a question mark (?).

The following are other abbreviations that will be seen frequently.
However, be aware that not all TTY users will be familiar with them.

ASAP	As soon as possible	U	You
RU	Are you?	U R	You are
HD	Hold	UR	Your
OK	Okay	BLDG	Building
DR or DOC	Doctor	MIN	Minute
THX	Thanks	FONE	Phone
HOSP	Hospital	TMW	Tomorrow
AMBU	Ambulance	OPR	Operator
EMER	Emergency	SRV or SVC	Service
IMPT	Important	THOT	Thought
Q	Question	ETC	et cetera
PLS	Please	CUZ	Because
NBR	Number	THRU	Through
MSG	Message	CUD	Could
WUD	Would	SHLD	Should

U.S. Department of Justice

Civil Rights Division
Disability Rights Section

Americans with Disabilities Act

Access for 9-1-1 and Telephone Emergency Services

Introduction

Dialing 9-1-1 is the most familiar and effective way Americans have of finding help in an emergency. The Americans with Disabilities Act (**ADA**) requires all Public Safety Answering Points (**PSAP**s) to provide direct, equal access to their services for people with disabilities who use teletypewriters (**TTY**s), which are also known as "telecommunications devices for the deaf (**TDD**s)."

This document is part of a technical assistance program to provide State and local governments and persons with disabilities with information about the requirements of the ADA for direct, equal access to 9-1-1 for persons with disabilities who use TTYs. This guidance is an updated version of the Department of Justice's earlier guidance entitled, "Commonly Asked Questions Regarding Telephone Emergency Services". It explains in practical terms how the ADA's requirements apply to 9-1-1 services, including equipment, standard operating procedures, and training, and should be useful to 9-1-1 service providers, equipment vendors, participating telephone companies, and individuals with disabilities.

Different emergency providers may have different capabilities and features. For instance, some larger providers have "Enhanced 9-1-1" or "E9-1-1", which automatically identifies for 9-1-1 call takers the telephone number and/or address of callers. Some providers have call distribution systems, which place incoming calls in a queue and distribute them to the next available call taker. Other, smaller providers may not have these capabilities. This guidance can be useful to all types of telephone emergency providers, both small and large.

ADA Coverage of Telephone Emergency Services

Title II of the ADA covers telephone emergency service providers and other State and local government entities and instrumentalities. The Department's regulation is published at 28 C.F.R. Part 35. To obtain a copy of the ADA or its implementing regulations, or if you have questions about the ADA, contact the Department of Justice ADA Information Line at (800) 514-0301 (voice), or (800) 514-0383 (TTY), or access the Department's ADA Home Page at: http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/adahom1.htm

> **Q:** What types of telephone emergency services are covered by Title II of the ADA?
>
> **A:** The phrase "telephone emergency services" applies to basic emergency service -- police, fire, and ambulance -- that are provided by public safety agencies, including 9-1-1 (or, in some cases, seven-digit) systems. Direct, equal access must be provided to all services included in the system, including services such as emergency poison control information.
>
> **Q:** In areas without 9-1-1 services, are PSAPs still required to provide access for TTY users to the telephone emergency services?
>
> **A: Yes. Where 9-1-1 is not available and a PSAP provides emergency services via a seven-digit number, it still must provide direct, equal access to TTY callers**. It may do so either by having one line for both voice and TTY calls, and it may provide two separate lines -- one for voice calls and another for TTY calls. ***Requiring TTY callers to call a separate seven-digit number is not allowed in areas where 9-1-1 is offered, because having to dial a seven-digit number is not equal to the ease of having to dial the simple, familiar 9-1-1***.

As with 9-1-1, services for TTY calls on seven-digit numbers must be as effective as those offered for voice calls in terms of time of response, hours of operation, and other features. In addition, PSAPs must ensure that TTY numbers are publicized as effectively as voice numbers and displayed as prominently as voice numbers wherever telephone emergency numbers are listed.

Separate Telephone Lines for TTY Users

Q: Can a PSAP dedicate a separate seven-digit line for TTY calls?

A: ***Yes, but TTY users must also have direct, equal access to all call-taking positions on 9-1-1 lines. A PSAP cannot require TTY users to call a seven-digit number when voice callers may dial the more familiar 9-1-1***.

Equal Access

Equal access means that the telephone emergency services provided for TTY users are as effective as those provided for persons who make voice calls, in terms of:

- **Response time;**
- **Response quality;**
- **Hours of operation; and**
- **All other features offered such as ANI, ALI, ACD, etc.**
- 9-1-1 calls from deaf or disabled callers must be processed as efficiently as a 9-1-1 from any other caller. This includes:
- Agencies must be able to process TTY calls from 9-1-1 lines, not separate ten-digit lines
- Silent 9-1-1 calls MUST be queried to determine if a TTY caller is calling – TTY callers cannot be required to hit a space bar or other button to let the Call Taker know there is a TTY call
- All positions within an agency that intakes 9-1-1 calls must be capable of processing TTY calls
- Calls taken from callers using a TTY must be processed as efficiently as non-TTY 9-1-1 calls
- Understanding ASL or ASL gloss is recommended to assist in the fast processing of TTY calls
- Employees should be training and retraining regularly on processing of TTY calls
- Employees must know how to troubleshoot TTY equipment, just like regular phone equipment
- **Direct, equal access requires PSAPs to have the appropriate equipment to communicate with people who use TTYs**. It also requires them to use the proper procedures and practices when TTY calls are received.

TTYs & Telephone Relay Services

A TTY is a device that is used in conjunction with a telephone to communicate with persons who are deaf, who are hard of hearing, or who have speech impairments, by typing and reading text. To communicate by TTY, a person types his or her conversation, which is read on a TTY display by the person who receives the call. Both parties must have TTYs to communicate. When typing on a TTY, each letter is transmitted by an electronic code called **Baudot**, which is sent from the TTY on the sending end of the call through the telephone line in the form of tones to the TTY on the receiving end of the call, the same way voiced communications occur between two parties. The receiving TTY transforms the tones back to letters on a small display screen.

Communication between two persons using standard TTYs can only occur in one direction at a time. Thus, both persons who are conversing cannot type to each other at the same time; they must take turns sending and receiving. A person sending a communication by TTY indicates that he or she has finished transmitting by typing the letters "**GA**”, which stand for "**go ahead**”.

A person can also use a computer with a TTY modem and related software to communicate with someone who has a TTY or who has a computer with TTY software and a modem. Computers generally operate in American Standard Code for Information Inter-exchange (**ASCII**), an electronic "language”. A person who uses ASCII must use an ASCII/Baudot modem and related software to convert the ASCII code into Baudot code, in order to communicate with another person who is using a Baudot-based system. Similarly, a person who is using a Baudot-based TTY must utilize conversion software to communicate with a person using an ASCII-based computer.

Telephone relay services are provided by States, as required by Title IV of the ADA, and are regulated by the Federal Communications Commission. Relay services involve a communications assistant often called a ***relay agent*** who uses both a standard telephone and a TTY and possibly a web cam to type voice communication to a TTY user and read a TTY user's typed or signed communication to a voice telephone user. Telephone relay services are not as effective for emergencies, because they are far more time-consuming than calls between two TTYs.

Q: Does Title II require that telephone emergency service systems be compatible with all codes used for TTY communications?

A: No. At present, telephone emergency services must only be compatible with the Baudot format. Until it can be technically proven that communications in another format can operate in a reliable and compatible manner in a given telephone emergency environment, a State or local government agency is not required to provide direct access to computer modems using formats other than Baudot.

Q: Can PSAPs rely on State relay services to answer emergency calls from persons who are deaf, hard of hearing, or who have speech impairments?

A: **No. The Title II regulation specifically prohibits emergency telephone service providers from relying on relay services**. Relay services do not provide "**direct access**", because they require the services of a third party and are far more time-consuming than direct TTY calls. However, if a person placing a call to a PSAP voluntarily chooses to rely on a telephone relay service, the PSAP must answer and respond appropriately to such a call.

Equipment

Number of TTYs

In order to afford equal access to TTY users, ***every call-taking position within a PSAP must have its own TTY or TTY-compatible equipment***. PSAPs must have systems that enable call takers to handle TTY calls as properly, promptly, and reliably as voice calls. Every call-taking position needs its own TTY equipment because experience has shown that:

- With TTY or TTY-compatible equipment at each call-taking position, call takers can handle TTY calls as effectively as voice calls.
- Call takers at PSAPs that had only one TTY per center had significant difficulties handling TTY calls within their standard answering time.
- Sharing a TTY among several call takers may result in undue delay in obtaining the TTY and connecting it to the answering position.
- Transferring a TTY call from a non-TTY-capable answering position to a TTY-dedicated position may result in the call being disconnected or undue delay in answering the call. In some cases, transfers may result in the loss of enhanced features, such as automatic number identification and automatic location identification information.
- ***Each call taker needs to query every silent, open line call as a potential TTY call***, as described in Section D, below. Because most PSAPs receive many silent, open line calls, often more than one at a time, each call taker must have his or her own TTY equipment to be able to query all of those calls with a TTY.

Thus, PSAPs may not provide TTY equipment at only a limited number of positions, such as, at only a supervisor's position, or at only one dedicated call taker's line. PSAPs must have systems that respond to TTY calls as promptly and reliably as they respond to voice calls. Call takers cannot be required to transfer TTY calls to specific phone lines or locations, unless voice calls are also transferred under the same circumstances. Transfers consume critical time, greatly increase the risk that the call will be disconnected, and may result in the loss of enhanced features, such as automatic number identification and automatic location identification information.

People other than "dedicated" call takers often act as call takers and therefore must have their own TTY equipment. For instance, dispatchers will often take overflow emergency calls when all dedicated call takers are busy, and supervisors may take calls on occasion. ***Every person who takes emergency calls from the public under any circumstances must have their own TTY equipment for the same reasons that dedicated call takers must have their own TTY equipment***.

Q: If a PSAP has only received a few TTY calls per month over the past year, why does it need TTYs at every call-taking position?

A: Most PSAPs receive many silent open line calls, which may be TTY calls. In order for call takers to know if silent calls are TTY calls, each call taker will need TTY equipment to query every silent call with a TTY. It is possible that call takers have been receiving more than a few TTY calls per month, but have treated them as silent lines or hang-ups rather than TTY calls. This is likely if the call takers have not been querying all silent lines with TTYs. Some of those silent lines or hang-ups may have been TTY users waiting for a TTY response.

Historically, many persons who use TTYs have not had confidence in the accessibility of 9-1-1 services and have not attempted to make direct TTY calls to their PSAP. The number of TTY calls each PSAP receives is likely to increase in the future, as PSAPs become more accessible to TTY users, and as TTY users learn of PSAPs' improved accessibility.

Q: If a PSAP complies with a State law, which requires only one TTY per PSAP, is that PSAP also in compliance with the ADA?

A: No. **Satisfying State law requirements does not mean that a PSAP is also in compliance with the ADA**. Some State laws require only one TTY per PSAP. The ADA, however, requires direct, equal access, which means that PSAPs must have enough TTY equipment so that each call-taking position has its own TTY capability. **In addition, if a PSAP has extra voice telephone equipment in case of malfunction, which most do, the ADA would also require them to have back-up TTY equipment. Therefore, under the ADA, virtually all PSAPs must have two or more TTYs**.

Enhanced Features

Many PSAPs have advanced features that facilitate prompt responses to callers. Many PSAPs have, for example, automatic number identification (ANI) and automatic location identification (ALI), which tell the call taker the phone number and address from which a call originates. PSAPs that have these features must ensure that TTY calls have the same access to enhanced features as do voice telephone calls. **TTY calls may not be required to be transferred to a third line, because those transfers often result in the loss of the automatic phone number and address information*. Another feature employed by PSAPs is automatic call distribution (ACD), which places incoming calls into a queue, sends out a programmed message to callers to let them know that their calls have been received, and distributes calls to the next available call taker. This feature, if offered, must also be made accessible for TTY calls, with a programmed TTY message.***

Relationship between Primary and Secondary PSAPs

Primary PSAPs (9-1-1 answering points) often transfer calls to secondary PSAPs (such as fire or emergency medical services) if they do not dispatch those services directly from the primary PSAP. In those transfer situations; PSAPs must correctly transfer TTY calls, as they do voice calls. Secondary PSAPs have the same responsibilities under the ADA as do primary PSAPs, and they must be able to receive transferred TTY calls as efficiently and as effectively as voice calls.

Other Requirements for TTY Equipment

Maintenance and Back-Up

The ADA regulation contains a specific provision requiring that covered entities maintain their accessibility features and equipment in operable working condition. In addition to this specific maintenance requirement, the ADA's equal access requirement obligates PSAPs to implement equally effective procedures for maintenance and back-up capability for TTY equipment as they provide for voice telephone equipment. For example:

- **TTY equipment must be maintained and tested at least as often as voice telephone equipment** to ensure that it is operating properly**. If PSAPs check their voice, telephone equipment every day to make sure it is working; they must do so every day for TTY equipment**. Similarly, if PSAPs have contracts with outside companies for maintenance of their voice telephone equipment, they must employ equally effective methods for TTY equipment.
- **Most PSAPs have plans for using back-up equipment in case some of its equipment or telephone lines malfunction, or in case there is a power failure. If a PSAP has such a plan for voice calls and equipment, it must provide for TTY calls and equipment in that plan**. For instance, PSAPs should keep extra TTY equipment on hand, in case the primary equipment fails, if they have back-up voice telephone equipment for such a situation.

Switching Between Voice and TTY Modes

All call takers must have the capability to switch back and forth easily from TTY mode to voice mode during the same call. This capability is necessary especially for silent calls, since call takers are required to first query the line by voice and then quickly switch to query the line by TTY. This capability is also necessary for VCO and HCO, which are described below. VCO and HCO shorten the lengths of calls that would otherwise be conducted exclusively by typing. Call takers who use stand-alone TTYs can switch from TTY mode back to voice mode simply by removing the telephone handset from the TTY couplers. TTY-compatible consoles for call takers should have built-in switching capability.

> **Q: What is VCO**? Who uses it?
>
> **A: VCO is voice carryover**. It is a communication hybrid of TTY and voice. **VCO allows a person with hearing loss to speak directly to the call taker and read the response that is typed back**. Many persons who became deaf or hard of hearing later in life prefer to speak instead of type. They use what is called voice carryover (VCO). With VCO, the caller speaks directly into the telephone and the call taker types back via TTY to the caller. VCO can be accomplished with standard stand-alone TTY equipment simply by having the call taker alternate between listening on the handset when the caller is speaking and placing the handset in the TTY couplers to type a response.
>
> **Q: What is HCO**? Who uses it?
>
> **A: HCO is hearing carryover**. People with speech impairments who are not deaf or hard of hearing often prefer HCO. **HCO allows them to type their words on a TTY to call takers and hear call takers' spoken responses through their handset**. HCO can be accomplished by a call taker using standard stand-alone TTY equipment by alternating speaking into the handset and placing the handset in the TTY when the caller types a response.

Procedures for Handling TTY Calls

In addition to proper equipment, direct, equal access for TTY calls requires that PSAPs use effective procedures for recognizing and responding to TTY calls.

Recognizing TTY Calls/Treating Silent, Open Lines as Potential TTY Calls

All call takers must be able to recognize and handle TTY calls properly. There are three types of TTY calls a call taker may receive. Some TTYs emit a recorded spoken announcement to the call taker that a TTY call is being placed, such as "HEARING IMPAIRED CALLER. USE TTY". Other times, TTY callers may press TTY keys to emit audible tones and more quickly notify the call taker that a TTY call is being placed. Most often, however, a person using a TTY will make a call that is perceived by the call taker as a silent, open line call. This is because the caller's equipment does not recognize that the call has been answered until the call taker sends a TTY response.

The only way for PSAPs to properly identify all TTY calls is for call takers to recognize TTY tones and to query every silent, open line call with a TTY to determine if it is a TTY call after it has been queried by voice.

Requiring Callers Using TTYs to Press a Key

In the past, some PSAPs have required callers using TTYs to press the space bar or other keys after they call, to emit tones and notify call takers that it is a TTY call. This requirement violates the ADA. Requiring TTY callers to press keys repeatedly until recognized is unfamiliar to most TTY callers, and callers cannot be relied on to perform such unfamiliar tasks, especially in emergency situations. Further, in many emergency situations there may not be time or opportunity to press keys repeatedly until recognized.

> **ILLUSTRATION:** A 9-1-1 call taker answers a call, responds with a standard spoken greeting, and expects to hear a spoken response. If the call taker receives a silent, open line, the call taker should query the line verbally a second time, and then query the line using a TTY to determine if the call is from a TTY user.

TTY Detection Equipment

Q: If a PSAP uses TTY detection equipment, does it still have to query every silent call with a TTY?

A: Yes. Some PSAPs have installed equipment that detects TTY calls and produces a voice announcement to the call taker that a TTY call has come in. TTY detection equipment, however, only recognizes TTY calls that transmit tones, such as when callers press keys to emit tones. This equipment will not recognize TTY calls when the caller does not emit tones and instead waits for a TTY response before transmitting. Thus, TTY detection equipment does not eliminate the need for call takers to query every silent line with a TTY.

Dispatching Police to Origin of Silent Calls

It is not sufficient merely to dispatch police to the origins of all silent, open lines, in lieu of querying the lines with a TTY. Precious time may be lost by sending the police if the caller needs another type of response, such as fire or emergency medical services. All silent, open lines must be queried with a TTY to assess the basis for the call and to dispatch the appropriate emergency equipment and personnel.

Conducting TTY Calls

After TTY calls are recognized, call takers must effectively communicate with callers during the calls. Effective communication by TTY will require call takers to be familiar with the use of TTY equipment and TTY protocols.

Training

PSAPs must train their call takers to effectively recognize and process TTY calls. Call takers must be trained in the use of TTY equipment and supplied with information about communication protocol with individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing, or who have speech impairments. For instance, callers who use American Sign Language use a syntax that is different from spoken English. In addition, in TTY communication, certain accepted abbreviations are frequently used. A list of some of those abbreviations is attached to this document.

The ADA does not specify how call takers must be trained, but the Department believes that the following are essential to proper training:

Training should be mandatory for all personnel who may have contact with individuals from the public who are deaf, hard of hearing, or who have speech impairments.

PSAPs should require or offer refresher training at least as often as they require or offer training for voice calls, but at a minimum, every six months.

Comprehensive training should include:

Information about the requirements of the ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act for telephone emergency service providers;

Information about communication issues regarding individuals who are deaf or hard of

hearing, or who have speech impairments, including information about American Sign Language;

Practical instruction on identifying and processing TTY calls, including the importance of recognizing silent TTY calls, using proper syntax, abbreviations, and protocol when responding to TTY calls and relayed calls; and

Hands-on experience in TTY communications, especially for new call takers, as part of their initial training orientation.

To ensure the effectiveness of training, PSAPs may want to consult the Emergency Access Self-Evaluation program, published as a manual by Telecommunications for the Deaf, Inc., under a Department of Justice grant. The EASE manual, which was reviewed by the Department, can be obtained for a fee by calling TDI at (301) 589-3786 (voice), (301) 589-3006 (TTY), or (301) 589-3797 (FAX).

Testing

The Department believes that frequent testing is essential to ensure direct, equal access. Testing call takers and their equipment is also one of the most effective ways to ensure compliance with the ADA's requirement that accessibility features are maintained in operable working condition. The ADA does not specify how testing is to be conducted. We believe however, that PSAPs should conduct an internal testing program in which they conduct random TTY test calls of each call-taking position. The tests should be designed to ascertain whether TTY equipment functions properly and whether personnel have been adequately trained to recognize TTY calls quickly, to operate TTY equipment, and to conduct TTY conversations**. The Department recommends the following for an effective testing program**:

To test whether call takers have been trained adequately to recognize TTY calls, a PSAP should conduct two types of test calls--silent, open line calls in which no tones are emitted and calls in which the caller introduces the call by transmitting TTY tones. ***Tests should be unannounced***.

It is best for PSAPs to keep records of the results of all test calls, including, at a minimum: the date and time of each test call; identification of the call taker and call-taking position; whether each call was silent or transmitted tones; whether the caller received a TTY response and the content of the TTY response; the time elapsed and number of rings from the initiation of the TTY call until the call taker responded by TTY; and whether the call was processed according to the PSAP's standard operating procedures. The testing program should cover each call taker and each position.

Some Helpful TTY Abbreviations

ASAP - As soon as possible

CD or CLD - Could

GA - Go ahead, your turn to talk

GA or SK - Go ahead or Goodbye

HCO (Hearing Carry Over) - TTY user will use his/her hearing during call

HD or HLD - Hold, Please

MSG - Message

NBR or NU - Number

PLS - Please

Q or QQ - Question mark

R - Are

SHD - Should

SKSK - Stop Keying, means end of conversation

TMW - Tomorrow

TTY - Teletypewriter

U - You

UR - Your

VCO - (Voice Carry Over) TTY user will use his/her voice during the call

XXXX - Error, Erase

This document is available in the following formats for persons with disabilities --

- Braille
- Large print
- Audiocassette
- Electronic file on computer disk and electronic bulletin board, (202) 514-6193

Unit References:

Department of Justice ADA Information - Last revised July 15, 1998
Fundamentals of Crisis Negotiations – Critical Incident Response Group, Crisis Negotiations Unit, FBI, Quantico, VA
San Francisco Suicide Prevention – PLAID PALS
Pierce County VAWA Stop Grant – Domestic Violence for Telecommunicators (911 Hang-up callbacks)

Unit 4

Emergency Medical Dispatch

UNIT TITLE: UNIT 4 – EMERGENCY MEDICAL DISPATCH OVERVIEW

LEARNING OBJECTIVES FOR THIS UNIT:

At the end of this unit of study when given a real or hypothetical scenario or question, the student will be able to:

- Describe the concept of Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD)
- Identify the components in the Chain of Survival
- Identify the categories of providers of Emergency Medical Services (EMS)
- Identify the five basic pieces of information which should be provided to medical responders

EMERGENCY MEDICAL DISPATCH (EMD)

Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD) is a *program* designed to assist callers with access to the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) system with an appropriate response by training telecommunicators to follow a series of guidelines or protocols. These protocols and guidelines may include a series of interview questions to determine the **chief complaint** or medical problem. Additionally the use of EMD helps communities manage their EMS resources by determining the appropriate **response** (i.e., ALS, BLS), in some cases, **response mode** (i.e., emergency or non-emergency), and **pre-arrival instructions**. The program may also be referred to as an Emergency Medical Dispatch Protocol Reference System (EMDPRS).

Definition of an EMS System: An Emergency Medical Services (EMS) system is a coordinated arrangement of resources. These resources include personnel, equipment and facilities that are organized to respond to medical emergencies. An EMS system covers the spectrum from prevention, access, response and rehabilitation. The EMS system is a complex arrangement of components whose design is to serve the needs of the public in medical emergencies. An EMS system may include dispatch centers, city fire departments, county fire protection districts, private ambulance companies, air ambulance, hospitals, medical practitioners, volunteers and the general public.

The goal of EMS is to reduce death and disability from out of hospital medical emergencies by providing a rapid response by trained emergency medical personnel to the scene of the emergency. The effectiveness of an EMS system depends upon the appropriate level of medical care provided to the patient in a timely manner.

The Call Taker plays a critical role within the EMS system. As the primary point of contact with the public, the Call Taker provides a channel for communications between the reporting party and EMS/public safety units. By providing effective communications, the telecommunicator may be able to reduce the frequency of death or the severity of disability.

All EMS systems must be looked at as a "**Chain of Survival**". Those elements consist of:

- **Early access to EMS (E9-1-1 and EMD)**
- **Early CPR**
- **Early defibrillation**
- **Early advanced life support – hospital care**

Over the years, EMS systems have introduced many programs without adequate attention to the first line—dispatch. Effective 9-1-1 programs and public education promote early access that is vital to a good EMS system. Over the last decade, there has been a national trend towards recognizing the importance of dispatching in EMS systems, adopting Emergency Medical Dispatch standards and providing certification for Call Takers. In 1989, the National Association of EMS Physicians (NAEMSP) adopted a position paper promoting standardized guidelines and training in the Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD).

PROVIDERS OF EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

First Responders: First Responders are used to provide immediate response to events determined to be highly urgent. These personnel are often trained in basic life support and provide immediate treatment or stabilization of the patient. Law enforcement personnel may have First Responder certification. At this time, First Responders receive at least 44 hours of training

Basic Life Support (BLS): Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) usually staff Basic Life Support units. EMT training encompasses at least 110 hours of training in patient assessment and treatment of fractures, lacerations and other minor injuries. Their skills include CPR, defibrillation, fracture stabilization, wound care, extrication and rescue. EMTs provide treatment and transport for the sick and injured in cases where more advanced treatments and interventions are not required or available. BLS units are also used to assist more advance level EMS responders.

Intermediate Life Support (ILS): Intermediate life support units have personnel with additional training in airway management and the administering of intravenous solutions. ILS Technicians often have training of an additional 80-100 hours. The use of ILS level providers in Washington state is limited to the most rural areas; primarily in areas with very limited ALS resources or extended response times.

Advanced Life Support (ALS): Paramedics with 1000 or more hours of advanced level training staff Advanced Life Support Units (ALS) (King County paramedics have 3000 hours of paramedic training) Paramedics respond to the most life threatening emergencies. Paramedics provide advanced life saving skills such as IV therapy, airway management, drugs and medications and field surgical procedures. All levels of advanced life support function under medical control and have a physician advisor they are responsible to.

ALS resources are expensive to set up, staff and equip. Most municipalities have limited resources with fewer ALS units than BLS resources. The EMD can begin to determine those patients needing BLS resources rather than ALS resources so that the ALS resources are preserved for appropriate responses.

Air Medical Services: Many EMS systems have air medical support available if needed. These are usually hospital based with teams of physicians and flight nurses specially trained in the medical or surgical services the patient may need. These resources are used in the most severe cases where transport time to the hospital may be the determining factor in patient survival. They are also used in remote areas where EMS ground transport units have difficult access.

In order for a helicopter to land they may require a **Landing Zone (LZ)**. Some landing zones are pre-arranged sites; others will be designated by the fire department at the scene.

EMS Resources: Your agency will have several resources available to assist EMS. Included in these resources may be a “Crisis Clinic”, a 24-hour psychological and emotional call screening and referral service; Poison Control, a 24-hour data bank with information pertaining to poison, drugs, bites, etc.; Chemtrec, a 24-hour resource for information regarding hazardous materials.

Specialty Hospitals: You should become familiar with specialty hospitals that your EMS units may be transporting to depending on the illness or injury of the patient.

Where is the:
- Regional trauma center
- Burn center
- Pediatric emergency center
- High-risk obstetrics center
- Hyperbaric chamber (pressurized oxygen-enriched environment)

COMMON TERMINOLOGY USED IN EMD PROGRAMS

Tiered Response: This is a layered response using several components to deliver the EMS system. It refers to the level of care being provided.

- The citizen who calls 9-1-1 and performs CPR or basic first aid at the scene
- The Call Taker who quickly assesses the problem and dispatches aid and offers pre-arrival instructions
- BLS units which respond to every reported emergency
- ALS units which respond to the most life threatening medical emergencies

Triage: (French word for "sorting") occurs when resources are prioritized by determining severity of calls from most critical to least critical, knowing the availability of personnel, supplies and equipment and knowing unit ETA's (estimated time of arrival).

Chief Complaint: This is the illness (medical) or injury (trauma) complaint that the patient is reporting and that generated the call to the system.

Response: Refers to "who" responds to the emergency. Through a series of questions designed to determine what the medical problem is, the EMD can determine which resources should be sent. Does this medical call require the services of a paramedic and ALS unit, or will a BLS unit, with EMTs, suffice?

Response Mode: Refers to the speed at which aid crews respond to the patient. Are they responding with lights and siren or not; based on the urgency of the illness or injury.

Pre-Arrival Instructions (PAI): These are simple first aid instructions given to the caller *after the response has been generated*. These have been approved by the medical program director and are given after the units have been dispatched. They have a psychological benefit for both the caller and the telecommunicator.

The Call Taker may be able to help the patient by providing pre-arrival instructions while units respond to the scene. A caller who is with a patient may be able to provide some type of medical assistance as EMS responders are on the way to the patient. There are also scripted emergency telephone instructions for Cardiac Arrest, Choking, Unconscious Patients and Childbirth, which lead you through a scripted narrative that can be delivered to the caller, literally teaching them to do CPR on the phone.

Goals of EMD Programs

- **Better Management of EMS and Public Safety Resources** through proper questioning and assessment of the situation. In addition, determination can be safely made regarding the severity of an incident and accurate decisions regarding unit response configurations and modes for the most efficient use of resources. For example, use of an EMD program would indicate that a BLS unit is sufficient for a patient with a minor injury, rather than sending an ALS unit to this patient. The ALS unit is not used until a life-threatening call requires an ALS response.

- **Better Patient Care** through the delivery of **post-dispatch/pre-arrival instructions** given to the caller to assist the patient until pre-hospital care providers arrive on the scene. For example, giving caller instructions on how to control bleeding or begin CPR can increase the patient's quality or chance of recovery.

- **Improve Patient Outcome and have Better-Prepared Patients** through the provision of post-dispatch/pre-arrival instructions that may maintain the unstable patient, preserve the safety of the scene, and initiate treatment of other patients.

- **Ensure Safer Emergency Response and Emergency Scenes** by sending the appropriate type of resources in the correct and safest mode.

- **Establish Pre-configured Responses** that are locally determined and customized by medical managers and that are built into Emergency Medical Dispatch Protocol Reference Systems (EMDPRS). This provides for uniformity in call handling by all telecommunicators and allows for closer quality improvement practices for case evaluation. The EMDs performance can be measured against a standard performance threshold found within the individual protocol used by the EMD.

- **Provide Help in Dealing with Time Critical Events –** The EMD program helps telecommunicators provide treatment of certain life-threatening and serious medical conditions such as shock, profuse bleeding, and respiratory and cardiac arrest. The EMD program helps telecommunicators identify life-threatening medical conditions.

- **Identifies High Levels of Medical Urgency -** that require more sophisticated and complex response configurations. These are tailored by and for local medical communities based on information available to the telecommunicator at the time of the call and require strict adherence to the approved EMDPRS.

- **Appropriately Configure Responses to Identified Medical Need –** based upon the proper use of the EMDPRS and application of the locally developed response configurations and modes.

- **Identifying the EMD as the "First of the First Responders"** - with the advent of EMD principles and practices, it is now acknowledged that patient treatment can begin the moment the telecommunicator answers the request for EMS. This treatment may include CPR, choking, and childbirth instructions. It makes the EMD a true "first responder" by providing early treatment before the arrival of dispatched medical resources.

- **Provides for a Quality Assurance Element in the Program** – The recommended administrative guidelines for EMD in the State of Washington recommends a quality assurance element be included in any EMD program.

Standard Elements of EMD Practice

ASTM Standard F1258-90 establishes the following as elements of EMD practice:

- **Obtains specific information about the incident such as location**, number of patients, etc.

- **Obtains specific medical information from the caller determining the "chief complaint"** or type of medical emergency

- **Accurately prioritizes each medical response** using pre-determined response levels – which responders are sent and how fast they respond

- **Determines the need for pre-arrival instructions**

- **Provides pre-arrival instructions if needed**

- **Alerts appropriate response units based on the EMDPRS**

- **Relays information to the response units**

- **Monitors communications about the incident to assist responders**

TELEPHONE ATTITUDE IN MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

It is always a part of the telecommunicator's role to calm and reassure the caller. This is best accomplished by projecting a calm and confident attitude from the beginning of each call. Emergency medical calls are where the telecommunicator can make a difference between life and death by quickly recognizing cardiac arrest and offering telephone CPR instructions. You must create successful communications with the caller to facilitate a positive outcome. The following are suggestions:

- **Be Quick - Quickly determine the location of the patient. Swiftly determine the chief complaint. No details are required at this point. Be sure to clarify if the caller is not with the patient.**
- **Do not ask unnecessary questions.**
- **Do not repeat questions - Ask each question once and record the response. Do not repeat questions unless the caller has failed to understand or you did not understand the response. Repetition wastes valuable time, projects an attitude of uncertainty, and distresses callers.**
- **Be alert to callers' responses - Listen carefully and record the responses accurately.**
- **Be reassuring - It is part of the Call Taker's job to calm and reassure the caller and to project an attitude of confidence and certainty. Tell the caller that you have taken action to dispatch aid. Don't act worried or unsure of your own actions. Remember your attitude will often determine how well the caller can help by performing pre-arrival instructions. You will be asking your caller to do one of the most difficult tasks that anybody can do in a lifetime; deliver CPR to a loved one.**
- **Do not be afraid to give assistance - EMD programs have been designed not to hurt the patient. Make a quick decision and stick with it, following your EMD protocols or guidelines.**

Reporting Party Categories:

1st party:	Call Taker is talking directly to the patient
2nd party:	Call Taker is talking to a person who has access to the patient or is with the patient
3rd party:	Call Taker is talking with a person who is not with the patient or a person who is not at the scene at all. The 3rd party may be relaying information from someone else.

MULTIPLE CASUALTY INCIDENTS (MCI)

Defined as single or multiple site incidents where the number of casualties or the severity of their injuries overwhelms the initial EMS response (resources). An MCI may be determined by the Incident Commander or by agency policy, or by the dispatcher. A single vehicle traffic accident in a rural community during the day may be an MCI for that agency as all the volunteers may be at their regular jobs. In a large urban setting it may be based on the number of patients. Most police and fire departments use a well-defined method of managing MCI's called the **Incident Command System (ICS)**. An Incident Command System allows on-scene commanders to effectively manage resources in large-scale incidents.

AGENCIES WITHOUT EMD PROGRAMS

There are agencies that dispatch EMS responders to medical calls who do not operate within an Emergency Medical Dispatch Program or list of protocols. There are other agencies that only dispatch law enforcement and do not normally take EMS calls, but may get requests from field units for an EMS response. For Call Takers or dispatchers taking calls or requests for medical assistance within these agencies, there is a minimum amount of information that should be obtained whenever possible. This is the information that if obtained and relayed, may allow EMS personnel to generate the appropriate medical response. One way this information is useful is in the situation where a law enforcement unit makes a request for a medical response. If the information below can be obtained, the emergency medical dispatcher or EMS personnel receiving the call may be able to formulate the appropriate resource and personnel response. This information includes:

Location (address) of the patient and location of the patient within a premise (include call back telephone number)

Chief Complaint – the primary medical problem. What symptom or medical problem caused the caller to call? If this is an accident patient, what was the ***mechanism of injury*** (i.e., head-on accident, car/pedestrian accident, etc.)?

Status of Consciousness (is the patient conscious and aware, has a decreased level of consciousness or is the patient unconscious)

Status of Breathing (is the patient breathing "normally" or not)

Age/Gender of patient as with any emergency call, the caller should be instructed to call back if the status of the patient or anything at the scene changes

With all calls, the Call Taker should also be aware that there are questions that should be asked if there is any potential threat to responders. Examples include:

- Are injuries a result of an assault
    - What was used?
    - Is the perpetrator there or in the area?
- Drug or alcohol involvement
- Weapons
- Hazards
- Combative or violent patients or others on the scene

UNIT SUMMARY

- Overview of an Emergency Medical Dispatch Program
- Chain of Survival
    - Early Access to EMS (E9-1-1 and EMD)
    - Early CPR
    - Early defibrillation
    - Early ALS
- Different levels of EMS providers
    - First responders
    - Basic life support
    - Intermediate life support
    - Advanced life support
- Common terminology
    - Tiered response- layered response with the level of care provided
    - Triage – prioritization of medical response based on severity
    - Chief complaint-the most significant medical problem involving the patient

  - Response – the level of EMS care provider being sent
  - Response mode – the speed at which the provider responds
  - Pre-arrival instructions – an approved set of protocols available to the EMD to provide on medical calls
- Goals of an EMD program
  - Better management of resources
  - Better patient care
  - Improved patient outcome
  - Safer emergency response
  - Re-configured responses
  - Provision of protocols for time critical events (life threatening illness or injury)
  - Identification of most urgent medical problems
  - Allows for local development of specific responses
  - EMD identified as the first of the first responders
  - Provides a quality assurance or quality improvement program
- Telephone attitude in medical emergencies
  - Quick
  - Do not unnecessarily repeat questions
  - Pay attention to responses
  - Be reassuring
  - Don't be afraid to provide assistance
- Reporting party categories
  - 1st party
  - 2nd party
  - 3rd party
- Multiple casualty incidents
  - "Single or multiple site incidents where the number of casualties or the severity of their injuries overwhelms the initial EMS response resources."
- Basic information needed to generate an appropriate EMS response
  - Location of the patient (address, location within the address)
  - Chief complaint
    - On accidents, mechanism of injury
  - Status of consciousness
  - Status of breathing
  - Age/gender (if known) of the patient

Unit References:

Washington State Department of Health – Emergency Protocol Reference System Recommendations
King County Emergency Medical Services

Unit 5

Call Interviewing

UNIT TITLE: **UNIT 5 - CALL INTERVIEWING**

LEARNING OBJECTIVES FOR THIS UNIT:

At the end of this unit of study when given a real or hypothetical scenario or question, the student will be able to:

- Articulate the purpose of 2nd tier questions when taking domestic violence calls
- 3 of the 2nd tier domestic violence questions provided in the curriculum

- List the behaviors of life-threatening abuser

- List the high-risk lethality factors

- List the two main points in the Missing and Exploited Children APCO/ANSI Model Policy that are emphasized in the curriculum

ALL CALLER QUESTIONS

When interviewing callers requesting assistance from law enforcement personnel, a general system of interviewing may be employed.

For any call, these questions should be asked. These "**All-Caller Questions"** are:

Initial Screening

- **Location**
    - **Where help is needed**
    - Where incident occurred
    - Where victim or witness is
    - Where contact needs to be made, if necessary
- **What type of incident is being reported**
    - Law enforcement requests, what type of incident is occurring or has occurred
    - Fire requests, what type of fire response
    - Medical calls – chief complaint and, if possible, patient age/gender, status of consciousness and breathing
    - Emergency or non-emergency

All Caller Questions

- **Severity including:**
    - Time lapse
    - Weapons
    - Injuries
    - Threats
    - Drugs/alcohol
    - Hazards
    - Other questions affecting responder and caller safety if warranted by the type of call

- **Caller information,** location, call back number, and whether contact with caller needs to be made by responders

Techniques for obtaining a location were discussed in the previous unit. It is important to remember to *clearly document if the location of occurrence differs from the location where a victim or witness is waiting for contact*. Jurisdictional issues arise out of the location where the incident occurred. Call Takers must know the jurisdictional boundaries for their agencies in order to send the correct responder. In cases where a victim is calling outside the jurisdiction where the event occurred, department policy may dictate that law enforcement personnel contact the victim by telephone. In other jurisdictions, they may elect to contact the caller in person. Agency practice will prevail.

When determining what type of incident has occurred, the call taker should have a basic understanding of the types of crimes or calls for service he or she will be dealing with.

First, the classification of a crime is that which defines the type of crime. The actual call-type designation may vary from agency to agency, but the Call Taker should have a basic knowledge of crime definitions in order to classify the call-type. (See: Law Enforcement Glossary at the end of this unit for generic crime definitions and common terms)

Report, "Cold", or Non-Emergency Calls

The general manner in which non-emergency calls are handled may differ slightly from agency to agency, but can be outlined here in a generic format. These are calls for service that are reported after the fact. An example of a report call would be a theft from a vehicle after it is discovered in the morning, or a residential burglary after it is discovered upon arriving home. The Call Taker should question the caller on the **All-Caller questions**.

How much information needs to be obtained on a report call will be determined by agency policy. For some agencies, once it has been determined that a call is non-emergency in nature, only the most basic information is obtained. For other agencies, additional information may be required. In either instance, the caller should be told that if they are not going to be available for contact to call back so that the information can be recorded in the call.

In-Progress Calls

While not all in-progress calls are emergencies, those, which constitute an immediate, imminent or likely threat to life or property, can be considered emergencies.

A report of garbage dumping in-progress would not constitute an emergency in most instances. A dumping of hazardous or unknown chemicals may change the *priority* of an in-progress garbage dumping report. For that reason, the Call Taker must use good judgment when interviewing all types of calls to ensure that a "routine" non-emergency call does not qualify as an emergency or higher priority call.

Many in-progress calls may have a higher priority because of the "time lapse" element. There is a greater chance of contacting the perpetrator or parties involved, if the call is responded to quickly. Again, Call Taker and/or dispatcher discretion may determine if an involved party is contacted or caught.

Interviewing in-progress calls requires good documentation of witness information. For high-risk in-progress calls, the ability to keep the dispatcher or field units updated with current information is vital to responder safety. The ability to ***safely*** keep a caller/witness on the telephone in order to update responders is recommended when possible. Asking the caller, "Is it safe for you to stay on the phone with me?" is one question you can ask a caller when attempting to determine caller safety. In-progress events can change rapidly. It is the Call Taker's responsibility to be able to keep up with changing circumstances, while apprising responders of the changes.

General interview questions for in-progress police calls follow the outline in Unit 3 or the All-Caller questions with clear documentation on:

Initial Screening
LOCATION - Where help is needed?
WHAT – is happening?

All Caller Questions
SEVERITY- injuries, weapons, alcohol/drugs, time lapse, hazards, caller/responder safety issues

CALLER INFORMATION

Motor Vehicle Accidents (just occurred)

- Where is the accident? If vehicles have pulled into a parking lot, get a complete description of where they are located.
- Injuries – what was the **mechanism** of injury (head-on, car vs. pedestrian, roll-over, etc.)? How many people are injured?
- Entrapment – is anyone trapped in the vehicle?
- Blocking – are vehicles blocking the roadway? Which lanes and what direction of travel?

- Description of the vehicles involved – CYMBALS – if this is a hit and run, complete description of the fleeing vehicle and driver or occupants if available, also where and what type of damage, as well as direction of travel.

Other Accidents (just occurred)

- Boating Accidents
  - Where – use landmarks, distance from the shore, nearest dock or launch site, etc.
  - Injuries – what type and how many. Is there anyone still in the water? Do they have floatation devices and are there any other craft in the area attempting to rescue them?
  - If needed can the caller direct responders to the site?

- Aircraft Accidents
  - Where – can the caller confirm the location or was it viewed from a distance. Obtain landmarks and any road access to the site or the area. Attempt to obtain specific directions for access to the site.
  - What type of accident – what was the craft involved?
  - Injuries – how many and severity, if known.
  - Fire or explosion involved?
  - Prepare to make notifications to all responders, the FAA, SAR, or others as requested.

Theft, Forgery, etc. In-Progress

(See Law Enforcement Glossary for definition of terms)

- **Auto Theft or Motor Vehicle Prowl**
  - Where is this occurring? If it is in a parking lot, get a specific location in relation to the caller.
  - What do you see? Does the vehicle involved belong to the victim? What is the description of the vehicle – CYMBALS?
    - Does the caller know who owns the vehicle? If it is their vehicle, are they behind on payments, could this be repossession?
  - How many persons are involved? Get a complete description of all suspect persons.
  - If the vehicle or suspects leave, what direction of travel?

- **Shoplift** (in-progress or just occurred)
  - Where is this occurring? Where in the business is the suspect now?
  - Has the suspect been contacted? Is s/he being detained? Is s/he causing any problem?
  - If suspect has fled – what is the description and direction of travel? Is there a vehicle associated with the suspect – description – CYMBALS
  - What was taken? How was it carried?

- **Forgery In-Progress**
  - Where is this occurring? Bank? Pharmacy? Business?
  - Is the suspect still there? How many? Complete description of the suspect(s).
  - Is there an associated vehicle – description – CYMBALS?
  - Who is the victim – name on bank account, credit card, or physician?
  - Have the caller keep you updated as units respond. If the caller can no longer see the suspect(s), update responders.

- **Hazards Reports**

Callers reporting hazardous conditions or circumstances should be interviewed so that the hazard is clearly documented not only in order to protect the public but also to protect law enforcement and fire/EMS responders.

  - What is the hazard?
    - Road conditions (ice, debris, animals)

    - Electrical wires down or exposed
    - Abandoned refrigerator
    - Traffic signal malfunctions (exact location including direction of travel and lane if known)
    - Open manhole cover
    - Possible hazardous material (see below: Fire Related Calls)
    - Other
- Injuries? How many and type?
- Ongoing damage occurring (e.g., water damage from canal or water main break)?
    - Roadways?
    - Structures?
    - Rail lines?

Call Taking Techniques and Information for Other High-Risk Law Enforcement Calls

Most of the calls listed in this section are in-progress types of calls, but may have unique elements to them. High-risk calls are those where there are clearly identified risks to the caller and/or responder. As with the responder safety issues discussed in Unit 3, use available tools such as previous history/events, premise/address information files and events in proximity.

There are certain types of high-risk calls where Call Takers may employ specific techniques. The following are some examples of techniques that may be used to gather information.

All Callers Questions:

LOCATION - Where help is needed?
WHAT – is happening?
SEVERITY- is there threat to life or property?
CALLER – information/safety

Consider asking on *all* of stolen vehicles, carjacking, incidents involving vehicles where there may be endangerment risks to persons, of asking the question, "IS THE VEHICLE EQUIPPED WITH a Telematics service (or "OnStar", etc. to clarify)?

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CALLS

DV is one of the most common high-risk reports received by a communication agency.

Questions for every DV call:

- **Has there been an assault?**
- Are there injuries?
- Weapons? Is there any potential for use of weapons or access to weapons?
- Is there a restraining or protection order in effect?
- Who else is/was present?
- Suspect, description, full name and DOB
- Vehicle?

Domestic violence cases are some of the most difficult cases prosecutors face in the criminal justice system. The unique dynamics encountered in domestic violence situations require those who deal with these cases (i.e. law enforcement, 9-1-1 communications professionals, prosecutors, doctors), to use a unique approach in investigation and, ultimately, prosecution.

In handling the special challenges of domestic violence prosecution, prosecutors rely heavily on the evidence provided in 9-1-1 tapes. A large number of domestic violence cases are prosecuted without the testimony of the victim. In these cases, the 9-1-1 tapes may be the jury's only opportunity to hear the victim's story. How a 9-1-1 communications officer handles a domestic violence call may make the difference in whether the prosecutor is able to hold the batterer accountable for his/her actions.

The Value of 9-1-1 Tapes in Prosecutor Domestic Abusers:

A. If victim does not testify, the tape may be the only evidence of the incident

B. Can provide information about additional witnesses who called 9-1-1. Unlike other types of "numerous calls reporting the same incident", **all witnesses on DV calls should be documented.**

C. Takes the jury back to the scene of the crime-makes it real for the jury

D. Corroborates victim's trial testimony

E. Good 9-1-1 tapes make stronger cases. Stronger cases lead to guilty pleas prior to trial

Second Tier Questions Techniques That Help Identify Life-Threatening Abuse

First, obtain the basic information for the call. This includes the where, what, weapons, who, how, etc.

The second tier of questioning is the additional information that may help the Call Taker to gather more information on life-threatening behaviors and high-risk lethality factors that may or may not be part of a pattern of violence. These 2nd Tier questions can be used to further determine priority, risk, and possible or likely behaviors or threats to the involved parties, family members or responders.

Second tier questions include:

Ask the caller to provide the abuser's name. If the caller did not provide the complete name of the suspect during first tier questioning, make sure to have him/her identify the suspect by name here.

Ask about any court orders in effect, if you haven't already done so.

Ask the caller for names of others present during the incident, including children.

Also be aware of caller's requests to remain anonymous and follow your agency policy.

Ask for details – describe how the suspect hit you, with what, where were you hit; if strangled, with one or two hands did the suspect use an object to strangle, etc. If the assault occurred in the house, ask for details about where in the house. Potential witnesses may be able to corroborate information about what they heard particularly if they can pinpoint where in the home the sounds were coming from.

If time permits, ask what seemed to set the suspect off. This information can be useful later if a victim recants and tries to blame the incident on his/her own behavior

Ask about history of abuse with suspect. Ask if this has happened before. Ask about past witnesses to the abuse and, if time permits, ask for details of past abuse or assaults. Details of previous abuse may help later refute an uncooperative victim's assertions that she "made it up" or that no abuse/assault took place. This may assist the prosecutor in moving forward with prosecution of a batterer without the testimony or assistance of the victim**.**

Obtain alternative phone number or location where victim may go. Victims often leave the residence before responders arrive. Ask her if she is going to leave and ask her for the address and phone number of her destination or alternately, ask for her work number and address.

Intervention should address the totality of the harm done by the violence rather than focusing only on a single incident. The more historical evidence, the easier it is to prove escalation and severity of the violence. If you are on the line with the victim or suspect until the officers arrive try to keep the conversation going to gather information. The information you receive helps the prosecutor and aids in officer safety.

Other information about assessing risk in domestic violence calls:

Techniques:

In speaking with a caller, avoid communicating your frustration or impatience with the situation (particularly with repeat callers). You want the jury's attention to be on the incident, not on a Call Taker's poor attitude or conflict with the caller.

Paraphrase the caller's responses back to them on important points. It allows the caller to correct any misunderstood information and it provides a way for the judge and/or jury to better hear a response to an important piece of information. *Tapes can be hard to hear when played in court, paraphrasing allows responses to be heard more clearly*.

COMMON BEHAVIORS OF LIFE-THREATENING ABUSERS

- Threats to kill
- Threat of suicide
- Threats against other family members or pets
- Frequent physical assaults
- Repeated and severe sexual assaults
- Infliction of severe injury or destruction of possessions
- Own or have access to weapons
- Stalking
- Frequent consumption of drugs or alcohol and violence outside the home (risk-taking)
- Hostage-taking/barricading

(Saunders, 1988; Gondolf, 1988; Browne, 1986 and Fundamentals of Crisis Negotiation – Critical Incident Response Group, Crisis Negotiation Unit-Federal Bureau of Investigation, Quantico, Virginia*)*

High Risk and Lethality Factors

Any domestic violence case has the potential for serious physical injury or death.

If any of these indicators is present, and especially if there is a cluster of indicators present, take all reasonable precautions to protect victims and any other reasonably identified at-risk person "immediately".

☐ Victim's "gut level" feelings of danger
☐ Threats (explicit or implicit) or fantasies of homicide or suicide
☐ Weapons (threats with, use of, access to)
☐ Obsessive about partner or family
☐ Separation (actual or perceived intent of the victim to leave)
☐ Stalking behaviors (especially post-protective order or criminal investigation)
☐ Depression (acute)
☐ Strangulation acts
☐ Access to partner, children, or other family members
☐ Dangerous behavior increases in degree
☐ Symbolic days/events (e.g., anniversary, protective order, divorce, family member's death)
☐ Perpetrator takes "personal risk" (e.g., public exposure, job-related risks)
☐ Alcohol/drug abuse
☐ Repeated calls to law enforcement
☐ Hostage-taking
☐ Prior history of criminal misconduct
☐ Harm to animals

Sources: Hart, Barbara J. (1993); Paymar, Michael (1993); American Humane Association (1997); Campbell, Jacqueline C. (1995); Ewing, Charles Patrick (1997); DeBecker, Gavin (1997)

Suicidal Callers

See Unit 3 under types of callers for information on suicidal callers

Threats (just occurred or recent)

Threats complaints, while somewhat common, must be carefully screened to determine, if possible, the immediacy of the threat.

There have been recent lawsuits filed against agencies for failing to place a high enough priority on a threat complaint where injury or death resulted.

Threats may involve domestic abuse situations or highly volatile neighborhood disagreements. Thoroughly interview the caller to determine the correct priority.

These complaints may involve persons who are in proximity at the time of the call, *but may also include threats made by telephone.* In attempting to evaluate the potential threat to the caller or target of the threat, the Call Taker should attempt to obtain the following information:

- Where is the party against whom the threat was made (victim)?
  - Is this a safe location for the victim? Is there somewhere safer they would like to go?
  - If available, check premise history and previous events to determine if there have been previous situations associated with the victim or suspect's residence or location.
- What type of threat? Was there a threat to person, property or other? Does the victim believe there is immediate or imminent danger? Have there been previous threats or assaults?
- Weapons? Availability or threat of a weapon? What type?
- If the suspect is not with the caller, how far away are they? How long would it take them to get to the victim?
- Alcohol or drug use? What and how much?
- Suspect information. Check the suspect WACIC/NCIC and consider checking him/her through your records management system. Were there previous incidents of threatening or assaultive behavior? Does the suspect have a weapons permit?
  - Is there a protection or other order in the system?
  - Associated vehicle – CYMBALS?
  - If the suspect has left the scene in a vehicle, direction of travel?

Any threat against life should be processed immediately. Caller or victim safety is the primary goal. Allow the caller to make the determination as to what is the safest thing for them to do. If the caller feels an imminent threat, has s/he armed her/himself?

Other high-risk calls include the following:

Burglary In-Progress (See below excerpted from Law Enforcement Glossary for definition of Burglary)

> **Residential Burglary** - RCW 9A.52.025
>
> A person is guilty of residential burglary if, with intent to commit a crime against a person or property inside, the person enters or remains unlawfully in a *dwelling* other than a vehicle.

- Where is the burglary occurring? Is it a residence, business, or other? Is the caller inside the structure being burglarized or reporting it from somewhere else? **Is it safe for the caller to remain on the telephone with you?**
  - Where is the caller in relation to the suspect? Can they lock themselves in a room? What does the caller need to do to stay safe? Is the caller alone or are others jeopardized? How many and who and where are they?
- What is being seen or heard?
- Where is the suspect(s)? What part of the building is being entered? Get complete description of all suspects. Where was entry made?
- Is there a vehicle involved? Is there a vehicle on the street or in a parking lot that may be involved? Get description – CYMBALS.
- Are there hazards to responders present such as loose dogs, physical hazards, etc.?

Robbery In-Progress

(See definition of Robbery in the Law Enforcement Glossary at the end of this section)

> **Robbery defined:** A person commits a robbery when s/he unlawfully takes personal property from the person of another or in his presence *against his will by the use or threatened use of force, violence or fear of injury* to that person or his property. Such force or fear must be used to obtain or retain the possession of property, or to prevent or overcome resistance to the taking. The amount of force is immaterial.

Robbery calls will put Call Taker skills to the test. The information must be obtained quickly, accurately and as completely as possible in order to update responders.

The Call Taker should be able to guide the caller quickly through the interview, but *should beware of leading the caller*. Ask the caller the question, such as, "what race was s/he", not "was s/he white"? If a security company is calling, obtain the inside telephone number to the business. If the robbery is being reported after the fact, call inside and ask to speak to the person who was robbed**. Attempt to gain first-hand information, when available.**

After obtaining the location information and determining the type of call, questions should include:

- Is the suspect still present?
- Weapon?
  - Displayed, implied, used?
  - Where was the weapon carried or placed?
- Injury? Who, what type?
- Time lapse?
- Was there a vehicle?
  - CYMBALS
  - Direction of travel
- Physical description?
  - Head to toe, clothing outside to inside
    - Any other pertinent descriptive information
  - On foot? Other?
    - Direction of travel?

- Are there other witnesses there? Did a customer or other person witness the incident or the suspect's flight?
    - If so, you may ask to speak to the other witnesses after obtaining the information from this caller.
- Is the caller safe or do they want to lock the doors?
- How was the money or property carried away?
- If the caller works for a business, is there videotape?

Update responders as quickly as possible and as frequently as necessary. If a vehicle was observed and license number obtained, immediately check stolen and registration on the vehicle so it may be provided to responders as soon as possible.

Suspicious Activity, Person, Vehicle or Circumstance

In reviewing the very sad reports of summaries of "Law Enforcement Officers Killed" that are received on the statewide teletype system, it is clear that a high-risk call type for law enforcement responders is the "suspicious activity" heading. Often these reports show statistically that law enforcement personnel investigating or responding to incidents of suspicious activity is one of the top three types of calls where responders lose their lives.

For that reason, Call Takers should take special care in obtaining as much information as possible on reports of suspicious activity. Care should also be taken that these calls reflect the correct nature of the call. If the Call Taker is taking the call for a dispatcher, make sure not to mistype suspicious activity as "miscellaneous".

Ask questions that clarify why the activity is suspicious. If the caller is describing a suspicious subject, ask, "What is he doing that is suspicious?" If the subject is acting furtive, e.g. looking around to see if someone is observing him, have the caller clearly tell you what is happening. Asking a caller if s/he can see the subject's hands or if s/he can see if the subject is carrying anything are questions that help clarify what the caller can actually observe.

Questions might include:
- Type of call, suspicious circumstance, person or vehicle?
- Details – what is being witnessed, description of activity.
- Suspect person description, direction of travel
- Suspect vehicle CYMBALS, direction of travel. Is the vehicle occupied?
- RP information – where is the caller in relation to the activity?

MISSING, ABDUCTED OR RUNAWAY CHILD REPORTS

Missing, Abducted and Exploited Children
APCO ANS 1.101.2-2010
National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC)

APCO and the American National Standards Institute created a recommended national standard for public safety communications responses to incident of missing, abducted or sexually exploited children. The standard may be viewed and downloaded at:

As part of the standard, they have a model policy that agencies may choose to use as a template for dealing with these calls.

The purpose of the standard and the *model policy* is to provide a best practice guideline and lay out the responsibilities of the agency in the response to missing or exploited children calls.

The first statement in the policy says: It shall be the policy of this Agency to take ***immediate and necessary*** action for all reports of missing, abducted and sexually exploited children. Additionally this Agency holds that every child reported as missing, abducted or sexually exploited will be considered "**at risk**" until significant information to the contrary is confirmed.

We will be talking about the terms and concepts of "*immediate and necessary* "and "*at risk"*.

Let's tackle "at risk". Why are children "at risk", generally?

We have 4 categories of Missing Children:

- **Non-family abductions**
    - 58,200 per year
    - Includes stranger abductions
        - Only 60-170 per year
        - 115 of these - strangers transport the child 50 or more miles away
        - 45 were murdered and 4 were never recovered
        - Range of homicide – 20-70 children per year abducted and murdered by "stereotypical stranger" abduction
        - 71% of the abductors were strangers
        - 48% had more than one perpetrator
        - Offender often uses a weapon
    - **Predominantly by persons the child has had some prior knowledge of or contact with**
        - 21% slight acquaintance
    - ½ are sexually assaulted (about 30,000)
    - 1/3 are physically assaulted (about 20,000)

- **Family abduction**
    - Est. at 203, 900 per year
    - Est. 117,200 with location of child unknown to searching parent
    - 44% were under 6 years of age
    - Only 56,500 reported to law enforcement
    - In 50% of the cases, efforts were made to conceal the child
    - 17% of children were transported out of state
    - **Psychological impact on the child is like that of combat veterans and victims of violent crime**
    - Family abduction risk factors
        - Of the 203,900 per year, ONLY 3,000 ARE ENTERED INTO NCIC

- **Runaways/Throwaways**
    - 1,682,900 per year
        - 357,600 reported
    - 350,400 are afraid to return home
    - 317,800 are dependent on drugs or alcohol
    - 305,300 are under the age of 13
    - 302,100 are with someone who is using drugs
    - 256,900 are in high-crime areas or neighborhoods
    - 70,500 have attempted suicide
    - 70,600 have missed at least 5 days of school
    - 69,100 have been physically assaulted

- **Lost, injured or otherwise missing (LIMS)**
    - Defined: when a child's whereabouts are unknown and the child is trying to get home or make contact but is unable to do so because of injury, age, unforeseeable circumstances, or miscommunication
    - 579,200 per year
    - 455,100 reported missing to law enforcement
    - 53,900 were missing due to injury
    - 7,800 were missing 1 week to 6 months
    - **60% of all children who are murdered *come in as missing children***

The timeframe in which a child is murdered:

46% within the first hour
76.2% within the first 3 hours
88.5 % within the first 24 hours

THIS IS WHY THE INTEGRITY OF PUBLIC SAFETY'S FIRST RESPONSE IS CRITICAL

The way in which the Call Taker handles the first report of a missing or exploited child may set the tone for the way these calls are handled or responded to. We may only have one chance to get it right.

ATTEMPTED ABDUCTIONS

One study estimates that there are approximately 114,00 attempted abductions annually, mostly involving lures of children into vehicles. NCMEC data from 2005-2010 show about 1,100 attempted abductions report to law enforcement. Most often attempts involve girls 10-14 yrs. of age going to or from school and with suspects in vehicles.

The first thing to remember about attempted luring or abduction is: **THIS IS OFTEN A "PRACTICE" SESSION BY SUSPECTS WHO INTEND TO ABDUCT A CHILD.**

How were they lured?
34% were offered a ride
12% were offered candy
9% were offered money
8% involved a search for a pet

How was the abduction prevented?
53% of the children walked or ran away
29% openly resisted by yelling, kicking, or pulling away
18% involved a Good Samaritan or parent intervening

- Of the reported attempts, 18% resulted in sexual abuse or indecent exposure
- Of suspects arrested or identified
    - 38% were known repeat sex offenders

  - 18% were registered sex offenders

SEXUALLY EXPLOITED CHILDREN-DOMESTIC MINOR SEX TRAFFICKING (DMST)

There are organizations such as Shared Hope International, who are working with legislatures, Congress, prosecutors, law enforcement and social services to assist child victims of sex trafficking.

When we consider the runaway reports that we take, we may not be looking beyond that initial runaway report. However, research done by this organization indicates that runaways are *highly at risk* for recruitment into the sex trafficking trade. The group aims to change the attitudes and views of the public, law enforcement and the criminal justice and social services communities by viewing these children as *crime victims*, not criminals.

When you take a report of a chronic runaway, do you ever wonder *why* the child is running away?

In runaway cases, like any other, there are many mitigating factors and their situation at home, about which most of us know nothing, may be very telling. It is easy for the Call Taker to develop a judgmental attitude about runaways, however, they are our customers, too and they are at risk.

What is domestic Minor Sex Trafficking (DMST)? A federal Trafficking Victims Protection Act defines the crime of human trafficking as: "A. The recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for the purpose of a commercial sex act where such an act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such act has not attained 18 years of age, or B. The recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery"[3]

Children are routinely approached, groomed and then encouraged to run away from home, after which they are at the mercy of professional sex traffickers or pimps. Some children are actually trafficked by family members. Children who live in homes where parents are drug users are at heightened risk.

55% of girls who live on the streets as runaways or thrownaways, engage in formal prostitution. 20% of them will become involved in nationally organized crime networks and trafficked nationally. One study indicates that 60% of minor sex trafficking victims began with running away.

Warning signs of DMST:

- Homelessness
- Presence of an older boyfriend
- Signs of violence and/or psychological trauma
- Making charges such as curfew violations, truancy, and other status offense
- Travel with an older male who is not a guardian
- Chronic running away (three or more times)
- Tattoos often serve to mark a victim as the property of a particular pimp
- Multiple sexually transmitted diseases
- Substance abuse
- Access to material items youth cannot typically afford

Accurately taking and sensitively handling runaway reports is a first step in providing assistance to a very at-risk group of children.

The APCO/America National Standards (ANS) - A Model Policy for Handling Calls of Abducted, Missing or Sexually Exploited Children

---

[3] Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) of 2000, Pub. L. No. 106-386-, Division A §103(8), 114 Stat. 1464 (signed into law on October 29, 2000); codified as amended in 22 USC 7102 § 103(8)

We discuss the APCO and American National Standards Model Policy because even if your agency does not have a specific policy on responding to cases of Missing or Exploited children, ***this is the national standard of care*** on this issue.

Noteworthy points in the APCO ANS Model Policy for Public Safety Communications in Responding to Incidents of Missing, Abducted and Sexually Exploited Children:

POLICY STATEMENT:

- To take *immediate and necessary action* for ALL reports of missing, abducted and sexually exploited children.
- The model agency policy holds that EVERY child reported as missing, etc., will be considered ***at risk*** until significant information to the contrary is confirmed

- ***Jurisdictional conflicts are to be avoided*** when a child is reported missing, abducted, etc.
    - If a child resides in or was last seen in this jurisdiction, this Agency will immediately initiate the required reporting process.
    - Even if the agency covering the jurisdiction where the child lives declines to take a report, this (the model policy) Agency *will* take the report and assume investigative responsibility.
- Questions concerning parental custody may arise-it will be the policy of this (model policy) Agency to accept the report of a missing child even if custody has not been formally established.
    - Reporting parties shall be encouraged to obtain/produce legal custody documentation as soon as possible since the safety of the missing child is paramount.

PROCEDURES:

Call Evaluation

- The Call Taker will gather information to assess the initial risk to the child and determine an appropriate response consistent with agency policy
- Research findings[4] show there are NO clear risk factors for non-family or stranger abduction cases where children are abducted and murdered. **THE VAST MAJORITY OF THOSE (child homicide) CASES ARE REPORTED TO TELECOMMUNICATORS AS "MISSING CHILD"** incidents rather than abduction or runaway.
- Risk factors for family abduction are clearly defined in research[5].
    - Call Takers are the first of the first responders-their role in protecting children has as its core the swift yet comprehensive intake of incident call information along with comprehensive collection of relevant record history information so that officers have what they need to establish an appropriate response.
    - Risk factors to be assessed are:
        - Prior threat or actual abduction
        - Suspected abuse corroborated by family and friends
        - Parent is paranoid and delusional
        - Parent has a criminal history
        - Parent is from a mixed culture marriage and is a citizen of another country
        - Parent feels alienated from the legal system and has no family support system
- The focus of the Call Taker should not be whether or not the case will qualify for an AMBER Alert.
- The Call taker must be trained on intake policies within his or her agency.
- Telecommunicators and field officers must be fully aware of and compliant with Federal Statutes which establish mandates for the incident intake and entry into NCIC of ALL missing child reports[6].

---

[4] WA State A.G. Rob McKenna, et al: US Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention, "Case Management for Missing Children Homicide Investigation", May 2006

[5] Johnston, Janet R, et. al: USDOJ, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, "Early Identification of Risk Factors for Parental Abduction", March 2001

[6] The National Child Search Assistance Act of 1990;Protect Act of 2003; Adam Walsh Child

Guiding Principles and Values

- Professionalism
- Compassion
- Respect
- Patience
- Commitment to accuracy and detail
- Commitment to follow-through and accountability (quality assurance)

Goals for Initial Intake

- Obtain and verify location of incident along with callback and contact info
- Obtain information through systematic inquiry using the agency's intake format
- Recognize potential urgency for missing child incidents and immediately begin proper notifications consistent with agency policy
- Perform all info entries and disseminations, both initial and update including mandatory entry of information about the missing child into NCIC

Instructions

- The protocol is intended as a framework for call intake but should not rescind or override agency procedures
- All info should be simultaneously entered as it is obtained into an electronic format when available (MDC/MDT) that will send messages to law enforcement responders in conjunction with on-air broadcasts.
    - When an AMBER Alert request for activation intake form is used, this initial entry should be set up to automatically populate that format to avoid double entry
- The call intake protocols are used to help ensure appropriate info is obtained.

DURING AND THROUGHOUT INTAKE:

- **Appropriately disseminate info to field units as it is gathered to promote rapid notification and response**
- Establish control of the call and relationship with the caller
    - Reassure the caller that you are going to help and may need to ask questions to do so
    - State it is important that they remain on the line with you to answer questions from you or responding field units
    - Explain that important information will be dispatched to responding units throughout the call to assist in the recovery of the child
    - Confirm that you will remain on the line with the caller until the police arrive on scene

ABDUCTIONS:

FIRST RESPONSE – INITIAL INTAKE

A. Location
    a. Of the incident- along with callback info
    b. If specifics are unknown request landmarks, or other identifying information-ask caller, if it is safe to do so, to remain on the line until law enforcement arrives
    c. Obtain names, locations of the caller and any witnesses
B. What is the emergency?
    a. What happened?
    b. Injuries?
    c. Weapons?
    d. Abduction?
    e. LIMs (Lost, Injured or Otherwise Missing)?
    f. Runaway/Thrownaway
    g. Child sexual exploitation

ABDUCTIONS

Family or non-family?

A. Time frame
   1. When did this happen? Is it still in progress?
   2. Where was the child last seen?
   3. With whom was the child last seen?
   4. Who last saw the child
      a. Ensure this information is conveyed to investigative personnel
      b. Complete background checks for investigative personnel
   5. Direction of travel, if known
   6. When the child was last seen, did s/he have a bike, skateboard or other large item?
      a. Description
   7. Relationship between the child, suspect and/or caller

B. Child
   a. Full name, DOB, physical descriptors
   b. Primary language
   c. Was the child with anyone else, child, adult, or pets?
   d. Any injuries?
   e. Child's medications, mental or physical disabilities?
      i. Type of meds, dosage, when is it next needed?
   f. DOES THE CHILD HAVE A CELL PHONE? (**DO NOT** have anyone try to call the cell phone. The info needs to be immediately forwarded for investigative follow up. Field units may request your support in executing silent tracking methods).

C. Suspect
   a. Full name, DOB and physical descriptors
   b. Primary language
   c. Is the child familiar with the suspect?
      i. If a relative, what is the relationship?
      ii. Who has custody
      iii. Is there a custody dispute?
   d. Weapons involved or possessed?
   e. History of violence or mental illness?
   f. Does the suspect have a cell phone? (**DO NOT** have anyone try to call the cell phone. The info needs to be immediately forwarded for investigative follow up. Field units may request your support in executing silent tracking methods).
   g. Background info on suspect
      i. Prior history?
      ii. Suspicious activity or possibly related events in proximity
      iii. History of attempted abductions in the area
      iv. Criminal or other agency record history
      v. Federal or state sex offender registration?
      vi. Public records or internet searches
      vii. **CONSIDER CONTACTING THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR MISSING & EXPLOITED CHILDREN** (1-800-THE LOST (1800-843-5678) to register the case and inquire about known sex offenders in the area as well as any history of attempted abductions in the area (they have a database that tracks this info).

D. Vehicle
   a. CYMBALS
   b. OnStar or other telematics service on the vehicle?

LOST, INJURED OR OTHERWISE MISSING (LIMs)

Defined: a child who has disappeared under unknown circumstances. May range from the child wandering away and becoming lost; to the child involved in an un-witnessed abduction.

Same information as Abduction except:

Suspect may include "Companion" with all the identifying information

RUNAWAY OR THROWAWAY

Runaways leave home voluntarily and are 17 years of age or younger.

Throwaway is a child whose caretaker makes no effort to recover the child after running away or who has been abandoned or deserted or who has been asked to leave his home and not allowed to return. These may not have been reported to authorities as missing.

Same information as LIMs.

CASE SUMMARY, HANOVER, MA – 2009

At 1 pm on a Saturday afternoon in June of 2009, a six year old girl was riding her pink bicycle in her own neighborhood in Hanover, Massachusetts, a community of 13,000 people 25 miles south Boston.

The father of one of her friends, high on cocaine, lured her into his apartment with the promise of showing her gerbils and guinea pigs. He carried her bicycle and her helmet into his apartment, injected this blue eyed blond little girl with a substance to make her sleepy, took off some of her clothes, bound her hands with black tape, chained her in a bedroom filled with chains, ropes and other trappings of sexual bondage.

The girl's mother, who had gone inside to put her son down for a nap, called 911 at 1:05 p.m. when she realized she could no longer hear her daughter outside. **The call taker answering this call had been trained on how to handle a case of a missing child in a way that makes sure children are safe.** The call taker did not tell the mother to look for her child or call back in 24 hours. *Instead, the call takers in Hanover began to apply the guidelines of a new ANSI Standard on Handling Cases of Missing and Sexually Exploited Children. Police were dispatched immediately to begin the investigation and search for the girl.*

At 1:30 p.m., 6 Hanover police were searching the apartment complex. The abductor became agitated when he heard police going door-to-door looking for the girl. Using a knife the abductor cut one of his wrists and then cut off the tape he had used to bind her. Covered in the abductors blood, the girl managed to escape through a rear door of the abductor's apartment.

A man assisting in the police search found the girl in an apartment building hallway still shackled. She told the police where they would find the man who abducted her. Police followed a trail of blood to the door of an apartment, broke down the door, and arrested the man after some resistance.

The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) credits the decision making and actions of this telecommunicator for saving this child from sexual assault or homicide. The decision to follow the guidelines for taking calls on missing children and to immediately dispatch multiple units to search for the child is credited with the successful recovery of this little girl.

The use of these guidelines on call intake for ANY missing child is recommended ***ON EVERY CALL, EVERY TIME.***

CALL TAKING FIRE-RELATED CALLS FOR SERVICE

Many fire-related calls for service are in-progress emergencies where life or property is threatened. As such, they should be considered "high-risk" with special attention paid to caller/public and responder safety issues.

BASIC INFORMATION

All fire dispatches require the gathering of basic information as discussed earlier in this curriculum:

Initial Screening

LOCATION - Where help is needed?
WHAT – is happening?
SEVERITY- is there threat to life or property?
EMERGENT/ NON-EMERGENT

All Caller Questions

CALLER – information/safety

- Location - ***where help is needed*** (**Where**)
- Type of fire (***What***)
- Severity or seriousness
    - ***Trapped***
    - ***Injuries***
        - ***Severity of injuries***
        - ***Number injured***
        - ***Patient information***
            - Consciousness level, status of breathing
    - ***Smoke, haze or flames visible, gasses or material spilled or leaking***
        - HazMat information
    - ***Size of the fire, spill, or event***
    - ***Exposures*** *– those materials in the proximity of the fire or event which may be endangered*
    - ***Fire/EMS Responder safety issues***
        - Weapons
        - Alcohol/drugs
        - Disorderly behavior or groups
        - Threats against responders
            - Is a dual response with law enforcement warranted?
        - Hazards
            - Materials
            - Power lines
            - Animals
- Basic reporting party (R/P) data
    - Location of caller, patient, victim/witness with callback number
- If arson, does your policy state to send police or a fire investigator for the report?
    - Description of person(s) seen
        - What were they doing?
        - Description of evidence.
    - Description of vehicle(s)

- Direction of travel

Before giving caller directions about evacuation, rescuing others or fighting the fire, the Call Taker should have knowledge of or refer to her/his agency policies addressing this topic.

SPECIFIC TYPES OF FIRE-RELATED CALLS

The following is an outline of questions to ask for specific call types:

- **Structure Fires**
    - ***Commercial Structure*** - Refers to businesses, healthcare facilities, public buildings, warehouses or industrial buildings and facilities. Some agencies may include multi-family dwellings such as apartments or condominiums.
        - Is anyone still inside? Where are they?
            - Are people evacuating?
            - Has the building fire alarm been activated?
            - Type of structure, wood, brick, concrete, metal?
            - Type of business? (Business, school, warehouse, etc.)
            - Hazardous Materials?
            - Exposures? An exposure is anything that is close enough to the fire to be damaged by heat, flame or smoke.
            - Access? Which side of the building, what floor?
    - ***Residential Structure*** – single family dwellings, although some agencies may include apartment complexes, condominiums, or multi-family dwellings.
        - Is anyone still inside? Where are they?
        - Where is the fire located? Smoke? Color of smoke? Flames?
        - Number of stories? Is there a basement?
        - Is there an attached garage? Vehicles? Hazardous materials?
    - ***Outbuildings*** – Detached garage, shed, barn or shop
        - Size of the building?
        - What is inside?
            - Animals?
            - Hay?
            - Vehicles?
            - Hazardous Materials?
            - What type and how much?
        - Access
    - ***Chimney Fire***
        - Flames showing from the chimney?
        - Are the walls adjacent to the chimney hot to the touch?
        - Smoke or haze present in the house?
        - Is there an attic?
        - What is the roofing material?
- **Wildland Fires** – timber, brush, grass or crop fires.
    - What is burning?
    - Access information.
    - How large is it?
    - Are there any exposures?
    - Buildings
        - Vehicles
        - Larger fuel source nearby?

- What direction is it moving and how fast?
- What is the terrain? Is it likely to move uphill?
- Wind? How much and direction?

- **Miscellaneous Fires**

  - ***Appliance Fires***
    - Is the fire on the stovetop or in an appliance on a counter?
      - For stovetop pan fire, is it safe to put a lid on the pan?
      - For counter top appliances, can the appliance be *safely* unplugged or the power turned off?
      - If the fire is in the oven is the oven door closed?
      - Is it safe to turn off the oven or power to the oven?
      - Has the fire extended to walls or cabinets?

  - ***Aircraft Fire***
    - Is anyone still inside plane? Where are they?
    - In the air, on a runway, at a gate or in a hanger?
    - What is the best access?
    - Is it a private, commercial or military aircraft?
    - Has fuel spilled? Is there fuel involved in the fire?

  - ***Boat Fire***
    - Where is the boat? In the water, at a marina, dock or inside a boathouse?
    - What is the best access?
    - If anyone is still on board? If so, how many?
    - Injuries?
      - If on the water are persons remaining on board or are they in the water? If they are in the water, do they have flotation devices?
      - Size of craft?
      - Exposures?
        - Dock, marina, buildings, and other craft?
      - Hazards
        - Propane tanks, flammable materials
        - Hazmat?

  - ***Vehicle Fire***
    - Is the vehicle occupied?
    - Type of vehicle? (Car, truck, semi, tractor, combine, etc.)
    - Hybrid or electric?
    - If the vehicle is a truck or semi, does it have a placard?
      - **If placard is visible, consider a HazMat response** (outlined below).
      - Ascertain the safety of the caller in relation to the materials.
      - **If the vehicle is a farm vehicle during harvest or in a field, consider wildland fire response.**
      - What part of the vehicle is involved?
    - Exposures?
      - Is the vehicle carrying something? What?
      - Is the vehicle inside a garage or carport, how close to the nearest structure or other exposure?
        - **If the vehicle is inside of or close to a structure, consider a structure fire response.**
    - Special access information.

  - ***Bark Fire*** (Beauty bark, bark dust)
    - What are the exposures?
    - How close to a structure or other vegetation?
    - Is the bark in a pile or spread out?
    - How much bark?
  - ***Dumpster/Garbage Can Fire***
    - Smoke or flames visible?
    - Exposures? Close to building?
    - Have there been explosions?
  - ***Illegal fire/Controlled Burn***
    - What is being burned? Is it a bonfire?
    - Is the fire attended or unattended?
    - Could this be a controlled/permitted burn?
    - Who is doing the burning?
    - Where is the fire in relation to the caller?
    - Does the caller want contact, or do they wish to remain anonymous?
    - Exposure or hazard?
  - ***Unknown Type Fire***
    - If location is not known, how far away and in what direction is the fire from the caller?
    - What is visible? Smoke or flames?
      - If smoke seen, what color is it?
      - Is the smoke a column or haze?
    - What type of terrain or area is it in?
    - What is the best access to the fire?
    - Was anything heard, explosions, etc.?
    - Caller location and call back number.
    - Would the caller be available for contact if the fire department is not able to locate the fire?
- **Fire Alarms**
  - ***Commercial Fire Alarm***
    - Type of alarm (full alarm, water flow, pull station, smoke/heat detector, rate-of-rise, etc.) Is water flowing?
    - Location of the alarm (floor, zone or room number)?
    - Confirm if it is a fire alarm and not a burglary or intrusion alarm.
    - Obtain an inside or after hours telephone number.
  - ***Residential Fire Alarm***
    - Type of alarm (smoke/heat detector)
    - Confirm it is not an intrusion alarm.
    - You may be asked to call into the residence, obtain an inside telephone number if possible from the caller or alarm company.
  - ***Carbon Monoxide Detector Alarm***
    - Ask health-related questions (breathing, headache, or nausea).
    - *Listen* to the caller-if they are not able to coherently answer your questions, consider the possibility they have been affected by CO, ask them to step outside and await fire units.
    - Give the caller the option to evacuate. If they do evacuate, have them leave doors and windows closed behind them, unless they have already aired-out the house. This will make it easier to determine danger or the source of the CO. *Know your agency policy on CO responses.*
      - If it is procedure, dispatch a unit that carries a CO detector to check on situation.
- **Hazardous Condition Responses**
  - ***Hazardous Materials or Flammable Liquid Spill Incidents Including Spilled Gasoline:***
      - Location and setting of the incident?
      - What is the best access to the site?

    - What kind of substance? (Exact name *or* ID number, color, and what form, solid, liquid, gas, etc.)
    - Beware of "names" of substances unless they are phonetically spelled – ID numbers should be compared to ensure accuracy.
  - Is there a*:*
    - **Placard** or a **bill of lading or manifest**, which can identify the material?
    - Check the North American **Emergency Response Guide** (DOT HazMat Book/ERG) by exactly spelled name *or* ID number. ID number may be preferable when available in order to avoid the possibility of misspelling.
      - How much is spilled or released? Is it still spilling?
      - Size and shape of container?
  - Source of the release?
  - Weather?
    - Precipitation?
    - Wind, speed, and direction?
  - Exposures?
  - Persons
    - Medical problems?
    - How many patients?
    - What type of symptoms?
    - Best access to patients?
  - Property
  - Animals
  - Environment
    - Waterways, storm sewers or drains.
    - If the spill is entering sewer, storm drains or other waterway, make proper notifications to those entities.
  - LOCATE numbers for Chemtrec or other agencies you may need to call for this incident
  - KNOW your procedures thoroughly.
  - FOLLOW any special Hazardous Materials Plans.

- ***Meth Lab Clean Up***
  - Fire responders may stage for the possibility of fire.
  - HazMat teams or specialty Drug Lab teams may help dispose of the chemicals.
  - Decon procedure for persons in custody or contaminated personnel.

- ***Odor Investigations*** (Other than gas or propane)
  - Smell of smoke?
  - Inside or outside?
  - What does it smell like?
  - Is there smoke or haze present in the house?
    - If there is a haze in the house, ask the caller if it is safe for them to evacuate until the fire department arrives. Close, but do not lock doors on the way out.
    - Electrical smell? Can they safely shut off the power?
  - Is the smell increasing?

- ***Natural Gas/Propane Leaks***
  - Outside:
    - Is there construction or digging nearby?
    - Ruptured or broken gas line?
      - Is it a service line to the house or a main line in the street?
      - Does the caller know the size of the pipe?
        - Is it hissing or roaring?

- Is this a propane canister venting from sitting in the sun or another heat source? Is the vent hissing?
  - Inside:
    - How strong and is it increasing?
    - Do you have gas appliances or heat?
      - **Natural gas** ***smells like rotten eggs. It is lighter than air and rises***.
      - **Propane gas** ***smells like garlic. It is heavier than air and sinks to the lowest point***.
      - If inside, ask the caller if they would like to evacuate, ***do not turn off any switches, appliances or electrical items, leave the door open as you leave***.
    - Notify the gas company per agency protocols.
- ***Non-specific odor investigation***
  - Inside or out?
  - What does the odor smell like?
  - Where is it the strongest?
  - Is anyone ill because of it? Is medical attention needed?
  - Is there a haze?

- ***Power Line/ Power Pole Problems***
  - Are lines arcing?
  - Do your agency procedures have you refer arcing lines to the power company or do they generate a fire response?
  - Are wires down?
    - Exposures around and under wires?
    - Advise caller to STAY AWAY FROM AREA.
  - Was there an explosion or loud report?
  - Is there a fire on the pole or on the ground near a downed wire? Are there any exposures?
  - Is there a transformer involved? Is the power on in the area?
  - If a motor vehicle accident has involved a power or other pole, is the pole damaged?
  - Is there a number on the pole that can *safely* be read?

- ***Bomb Threat***
  - Follow special procedures for your department.
    - Many procedures say the Fire Department will stage until the Police Department or Bomb Squad checks out the situation.
    - Some procedures notify the fire department only – no response is generated until they are needed.
    - Some procedures call for no radio transmissions or cellular telephone and pager use. Some radio waves can cause an explosive device to explode.

Unit References:

- WSCJTC ©Telecommunicator I – 1995-2002
- Pierce Co. WA, VAWA Stop Grant – DV for Telecommunicators
- WASPC Model Policy 2004 – Officer Involved Domestic Violence
- WA State A.G. Rob McKenna, et al: US Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention, "Case Management for Missing Children Homicide Investigation", May 2006
- Johnston, Janet R, et. al: USDOJ, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, "Early Identification of Risk Factors for Parental Abduction", March 2001
- The National Child Search Assistance Act of 1990;Protect Act of 2003; Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act of 2006

- National Center for Missing and Exploited Children –
    - Handling calls of Missing and Exploited Children
    - Chief Executive Officer Seminar
- Shared Hope International
    - Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking (The National Report on)
- APCO International – APCO ANS 1.101.2-2010 – Standard for Public Safety Telecommunicators when Responding to Calls of Missing, Abducted, and Sexually Exploited Children

Unit 6

LAW ENFORCEMENT GLOSSARY

Unit 6- Law Enforcement Glossary of Terms & Crimes Defined

The purpose of this glossary is to provide basic definitions for public safety telecommunicators. It is not intended to replace policy or practice at the students' agency regarding the type coding of calls for service or other practices, but instead to give the student a basic description of terms that may be used in the course of their duties or this course of study.

AFFIRMATIVE	Synonymous with "yes".
ALARM	A method of home/business security that is intended to deter criminals and elicit a rapid response by police/fire personnel.
ALIAS	A term used to designate a name assumed by a person who wishes to conceal their real name, by which he passes or is known. Sometimes referred to as AKA, also known as.
ANTICIPATORY OFFENSES	(RCW 9A. 28): Incomplete or interrupted crimes.
ARREST	The taking of a person into custody so that he may be held to answer for a crime.
ARRIVAL	When a responder arrives at the scene.
ARSON	**Intentionally causing a fire or explosion**
ASSAULT	An attempt, with force or violence, to do harm to another, as by striking at him/her with or without a weapon.
Custodial Assault	Assaults a corrections officer while in the performance of their official duties.
Domestic Violence Defined	Any assault between family or household members, persons with a child in common or who have had a dating relationship. **Domestic Violence**
Domestic Violence (cont.) **What it is ---** **Who it is –**	Domestic violence means: • Physical harm, bodily injury or assault • Infliction of fear of imminent physical harm, bodily injury or assault • Sexual assault of one family or household member by another • Stalking as defined in RCW 9A.46.110 of one family or household member by another **Family or household members** means: • **Spouses, former spouses** • **Persons who have a child in common** (regardless of whether they have been married or lived together) • **Adult persons related by blood or marriage** • **Adult persons who are now or have in the past lived together** • **Persons 16 years old or older who have had a dating relationship** • **Persons who have a biological or legal parent-child relationship** • Including **stepparents/stepchildren** • **Grandparents/grandchildren** RCW 10.99.040 deals with restrictions upon and duties of the court when dealing with domestic violence related issues.

Violation of no contact order -	Because of the likelihood of repeated violence, the court may issue a *no contact order*. **A willful violation of a court order issued under this RCW 's subsections (1 & 2), is a Gross Misdemeanor**, while an actual ***assault* in violation of an order issued is at least a Class C Felony**. It is also a Class C Felony if the offender has at least two previous convictions for violating provisions of a no contact order issued under this chapter. RCW 10.31.100 – Arrest without Warrant
Arrest without warrant (includes DV special circumstances) -----	**Law enforcement personnel having probable cause to believe that a person has committed or is committing a felony** have the right to arrest without a warrant. They may also arrest for a misdemeanor or gross misdemeanor when the offense is committed in their presence or under special circumstances outlined in this chapter. These special circumstances include: • A violation of a restraining order or order restraining the suspect from threats or acts of violence • A person 16 years of age or older *has assaulted a family or household member* **within the preceding four hours** • The officer shall arrest the person whom the officer believes to be the **primary physical aggressor**
Arrest of DV suspect within four hours ----	"No police officer may be held criminally or civilly liable for making an arrest pursuant to RCW 10.31.100 (sections specified) if the police officer acts on good faith and without malice.
Requirement *to* arrest ----	This section specifies that law enforcement personnel ***shall*** arrest and take into custody persons the officer has probable cause to believe have committed domestic related assaults or violated court orders restraining the suspects from acts or threats of violence; assaults another with a firearm or other deadly weapon
Interfering with the ------reporting of a domestic violence	**RCW 9A.36.150** **Interfering with the reporting of domestic violence.** (1) A person commits the crime of interfering with the reporting of domestic violence if the person: (a) Commits a crime of domestic violence, as defined in RCW 10.99.020; and (b) Prevents or attempts to prevent the victim of or a witness to that domestic violence crime from calling a 911 emergency communication system, obtaining medical assistance, or making a report to any law enforcement official. (2) Commission of a crime of domestic violence under subsection (1) of this section is a necessary element of the crime of interfering with the reporting of domestic violence. (3) Interference with the reporting of domestic violence is a gross misdemeanor
ASSUME	To draw a conclusion based on assumed factors, and not based on a complete picture of events.

ATL	An attempt to locate a person, vehicle or property.
AUTO-LOADING	Self-loading firearm.
AUTOMATIC FIREARM	A type of firearm that after a shot is fired, ejects the shell and pushes a fresh cartridge into the breach.
BACKUP	An additional police unit responding to assist another unit
BAIL	A security given by a person charged with a crime so that he may be released until his appearance is necessary for further examination or for trial.
BENCH WARRANT	A process issued by a judge directing that a named person be brought before the court. It is issued in the case of contempt or where an indictment has been found and the defendant has not been taken into custody, or to bring in a witness who has defaulted on a subpoena.
BOLO	Be on the Look Out; notifies police agencies of information that could become important to their area.
BOND	An obligation in writing to pay a sum of money, or to act or not act in a particular way--this is specified in writing.
BRIBERY	The receiving or offering of any undue reward by or to any public official in order to influence any official act or behavior in office.
BURGLARY	**Definition: Entering a structure, dwelling, or building with the intent to commit a crime**
CAD	Computer Aided Dispatch.
CALIBER	The internal diameter of the barrel of a gun.
CITATION	A judicial summons; a court writ commanding the person named therein to appear in court on a certain day. It is similar to a summons or a subpoena.
COERCION	Compelling another person to do or abstain from doing an act which the other person has a legal right to do or abstain from doing; wrongfully and unlawfully using violence; depriving such person or any tool, implement or clothing or hindering him in the use thereof, or attempting to intimidate such a person by threat or force.
COMMUNITY PROPERTY	All property acquired or earned during a marriage by either wife or husband, becomes their joint property. Everything is owned equally except for the property acquired before the marriage, or gifts specifically given to one or another partner during the marriage.
COMPLAINANT	One who instigates a charge against another; one that brings a charge against another. One who enters a formal complaint before a magistrate. Also, one who calls the police to investigate an incident.
COPY	Sometimes used to indicate that radio traffic has been received or acknowledged.
COVER	Same as backup. To send another unit to assist.
CRIME	An act committed or omitted in violation of a law forbidding or commanding it, and to which is assigned, a punishment.
CRIME CLASSIFICATION Class A Felony **Class B Felony**	Crimes are divided into felonies and misdemeanors. They are further subdivided into Class A, Class B, and Class C Felonies, Misdemeanors and Gross Misdemeanors. **Class A:** Maximum sentence of imprisonment authorized by law upon a first conviction is twenty years or more **Class B:** Maximum sentence of imprisonment authorized by law upon a first conviction is eight years or more **Class C felony** Maximum sentence of imprisonment authorized by law upon a first conviction is less than eight years **Misdemeanor:** Any crime punishable by a fine of not more than

Class C Felony **Misdemeanor** **Gross Misdemeanor**	one thousand dollars or by imprisonment in a county jail for not more than ninety days or by both. When the performance of any act is prohibited by any statute and no penalty for the violation of such statute is imposed, the committing of this act is a misdemeanor **Gross misdemeanor:** All crimes other than felonies and misdemeanors are gross misdemeanors
DEFENDANT	A person against whom an action is brought. One who is obliged to defend a charge placed against him.
DEFRAUD	To take or withhold something from another by fraud, cheat, or swindle. To cheat another by trick or artifice.
DISPOSITION	The end result of a call for service.
DOA	Dead on arrival. (Dead body)
DUAL RESPONSE	Where police and fire personnel respond to the same incident.
DISORDERLY CONDUCT	This term embraces certain minor offenses, usually defined by statute, which consists in a disturbance of the peace and quiet of the public.
DOCUMENTATION	To keep a written/typed log of an incident or an activity that you feel may be needed at a later time to verify facts and participants.
DUI	Driving under the influence of an intoxicating agent.
EMBEZZLEMENT	Act of a person who, having money in his possession as an officer, bailee, trustee, agent, attorney, etc., appropriates it to his own use or the use of another.
EMS	Emergency Medical Services.
EMT	Emergency Medical Technician.
ENTRAPMENT	The act of a police officer in inducing another person to commit a crime for the purpose of apprehending and charging him with it.
ENTRY	In the crime of burglary, the entrance of the offender into a building or apartment, or the insertion therein of any part of his body or of any instrument or weapon held in his hand, and used, or intended to be used, to threaten or intimidate the inmates, or to detach or remove property. Unlawful entry; where entry into such a building is made without breaking into or out of the building, but with the intent to commit a crime.
ETA	Estimated time of arrival.
EXTORTION	The obtaining of property from another, with his consent, induced by a wrongful use of force or fear.
EXTRADITE	To transport a person from one jurisdiction to another when a person is in police custody.
FELONY	A crime of a more serious nature than those designated as Misdemeanors. There are various classes (or degrees) of Felonies with varying sentences for each class. Upon conviction of a Felony, a person may be sentenced to more than one year of imprisonment. See: Crime Classifications for more detail.
FOLLOW-UP	After an initial incident report has been taken, an officer may make contact with someone for further information or clarification.
FORGERY	The act of falsely making or materially altering, with intent to defraud; any writing which, if genuine, might be of legal efficacy or the foundation of a legal liability.
FRAUD	Withholding from another of that which is justly due him, or depriving him of a right by deception or artifice.

HARASSMENT

Harassment - RCW 10.14.020

(1) “Unlawful harassment” means a knowing and willful course of conduct directed at a specific person, who seriously alarms, annoys, harasses, or is detrimental to such person and which serves no legitimate or lawful purpose. This course of conduct will be such that it would cause a *reasonable person* to suffer substantial emotional distress. This also includes harassment by a person over 18 years of age that causes a reasonable parent to fear for the wellbeing of their child.

(2) “Course of conduct” means a pattern of conduct composed of a series of acts over a period of time, however short, “evidencing a continuity of purpose”. Constitutionally protected activity is not included with the meaning of “course of conduct”.

Harassment - RCW 9A.46.020

A person is guilty of harassment if that person:

- Threatens another with the threat of bodily injury, immediately or in the future
- Threatens to cause physical damage to the property of another
- Threatens physical confinement or restraint
- Threatens any malicious act intended to substantially harm another with respect to physical or mental health or safety
- **The suspect by words or conduct places the victim in reasonable fear that the threat will be carried out**.

A person who harasses another is guilty of a Gross Misdemeanor, *unless:*

- The suspect has been previously convicted *in this or any other state* of any crime of harassment of the same victim or victim’s household member or family
- The suspect has been named in a no-contact or no-harassment order
- The suspect has threatened to kill the victim
- **If any of these conditions apply, the suspect is guilty of a Class C Felony**.

Harassment – Place where committed RCW 9A.46.030

Place where harassment committed -----

Any harassment offense committed in the previous section or under 9A.46.110, may be **deemed *to have been committed where the conduct occurred or at the place from where the threat was made or the place where the threat was received*.**

Malicious Harassment

Malicious harassment - RCW 9A.36.080

A person is guilty of malicious harassment if s/he maliciously and intentionally commits one of the following acts because of his/her perception of the victim’s:

	• **Race** • **Color** • **Religion** • **Ancestry** • **National origin** • **Gender** • **Sexual orientation** • **Mental, physical or sensory handicap** And • Causes physical injury to the victim or another person • Causes physical damage to property of the victim or another person • Threatens a specific person or group of persons and places that person(s) in reasonable fear of harm to person or property. The fear must be a fear a *reasonable person* would have under the same circumstances. For purposes of this section, a reasonable person is a member of the victim's race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation or handicap. In prosecution of malicious harassment, it is inferred that a victim or group of victims have been targeted as one of the persons or groups described above if the suspect commits one of the following acts: • Burns a cross on property of the victim who is African American • Defaces the property of a Jewish victim with a swastika **Malicious harassment is Class C Felony**.
Telephone Harassment	**Telephone harassment** – RCW 9.61.230 "Every person who, with intent to harass, intimidate, torment or embarrass any other person, shall make a telephone call to such other person: • Using lewd, lascivious, profane, indecent, or obscene language, or suggesting the commission of lewd or lascivious act; or • Anonymously and repeatedly or at an extremely inconvenient hour, whether or not conversation ensues; or • Threatening to inflict injury on the person or property of the victim, the victim's family or household "Shall be guilty of a **Gross Misdemeanor**" except if the following applies": • The suspect has been previously convicted of the crime of harassment, with the same victim or member of victim's household or family, or any person named in a no-contact or no-harassment order *in this or any other state; or* • Threatens to kill the victim **If these conditions apply, the suspect is guilty of a Class C Felony**.
HBD	Has been drinking.

HOMICIDE **Criminal**	1. Murder requires Intent to kill. 2. Manslaughter is caused by Reckless or Negligent behavior. 3. Homicide by Abuse 4. Vehicular Homicide
Non-Criminal	1. **Justifiable Homicide** is self-defense or in defense of another 2. **Excusable Homicide** is an accidental death
INCITE	To persuade or move another to commit a crime.
INDECENT EXPOSURE	Any person who willfully and lewdly exposes his person or the private parts thereof, in any public place where others are present. Such exposure, to constitute a crime, must be intentional, willful, and lewd and committed in a public place.
INDICTMENT	A written accusation delivered by a grand jury charging a person with a felony or misdemeanor.
INFORMANT	A person who, under the normal acceptance of the word, gives information of a confidential nature to law enforcement agencies relating to criminal activities.
INVESTIGATION	Careful inquiry or research; an inquiry by authority. An investigation by police is an examination and inquiry into the cause of certain events.
JURISDICTION	Fundamentally, a court has jurisdiction to try only those crimes committed in the county where the court is located. The venue or place where the crime is committed determines where the defendant shall be tried.
KIDNAPPING	When a person seizes, confines, abducts, or entices away another, with intent to cause him to be confined or imprisoned within the state, or to be sent out of state, or in any way to be held to service or kept or detained against his will without authority by law. The use of force or violence is not necessary to constitute the crime of kidnapping, if threat or fraud is used to carry out the intended plan.
LARCENY	A person who, with intent to deprive or defraud another of the use and benefit of property. The gist of larceny is the taking and carrying away of personal property of another with the specific intent to steal such property. Synonymous with "theft"
LIVIDITY	Ashy, pale, lead coloration of a dead body. Blood, like any other fluid, will gravitate to the bottom in a dead body. This draining of the blood to the lower regions will leave an ashy pale appearance in the upper portion of the body.
MALICIOUS MISCHIEF	Committing of an injury to public or private property from sheer wantonness or malice.
MANSLAUGHTER	A homicide when committed without design to effect death, but not justifiable or excusable. A homicide may only be classed as manslaughter where there is no design to kill; intent to kill is the element that distinguishes murder from manslaughter.
MODUS OPERANDI (MO)	A manner of operation. Many criminals operate a stereotypical manner, seldom deviating from their usual method of operation.
MUTUAL AID	An agreement between two or more agencies to assist each other in case of an emergency or a need for greater resources.
NEGATIVE	Synonymous to no.
NUISANCE	That which, by its use or existence, is an annoyance or damage to another.
OMISSION	The act of omitting or state of being omitted, neglect or failure to

	do something that should and can be done.
PAROLE	The release of a prisoner from jail on his own recognizance. It differs from probation in that in parole, the prisoner has served some part of his sentence, whereas in probation, the defendant has not served any part of his sentence, which is suspended during the period of probation.
PETITIONER	The person who petitions the court, as in an order for protection or no contact order. The one who asks for the order.
PLAINTIFF	A person who institutes an action; the party who complains and sues in a civil action; the complaining party in an action.
PROBABLE CAUSE	Belief based on well-grounded suspicion that a person has committed a crime.
PROVOCATION	An incitement to action; stimulus; something that stirs to anger.
RAPE	An unlawful act of sexual intercourse against the victim's will or without the victim's consent.
RCW	Revised Code of Washington. Statutes of law of the State of Washington.
RECOGNIZANCE	An obligation or bond under which a person acknowledges that he owes the state a sum of money if the conditions specified in the recognizance are not carried out.
RELEVANT	Pertinent; applicable; fitting.
REPOSSESSION	The taking back of property that was sold under contract to a second party, when the second party is in default of the contract terms.
RESPONDENT	The person responding to, not initiating, a court ordered civil paper. The person against whom the order is directed.
RESTRAINING ORDER	A civil order of a court restricting a specific person or group of people from doing something.
ROBBERY	**Robbery defined:** A person commits a robbery when s/he unlawfully takes personal property from the person of another or in his presence *against his will by the use or threatened use of force, violence or fear of injury* to that person or his property. Such force or fear must be used to obtain or retain the possession of property, or to prevent or overcome resistance to the taking. The amount of force is immaterial.
RP	Reporting party.
RP INFORMATION	Includes name, address, and telephone number.
SEARCH WARRANT	An order in writing in the name of the People of the State, and signed by a judge. It is directed to a peace officer, and commands him to search for personal property and bring it before the court.
SHOPLIFTER	One guilty of stealing goods exposed for sale in a store.
Stalking	**Stalking – RCW 9A.46.110** (1) **RCW 9A.46.110** **Stalking.** *(Effective until July 1, 2004.)* (1) A person commits the crime of stalking if, without lawful authority and under circumstances not amounting to a felony attempt of another crime:

(a) **He or she intentionally and repeatedly harasses** or repeatedly follows another person; and

(b) The person being harassed or followed is placed in fear that the stalker intends to injure the person, another person, or property of the person or of another person. The feeling of fear must be one that a reasonable person in the same situation would experience under all the circumstances; and

(c) The stalker either:

(i) **Intends to frighten, intimidate, or harass the person**; or

(ii) Knows or reasonably should know that the person is afraid, intimidated, or harassed even if the stalker did not intend to place the person in fear or intimidate or harass the person.

(2)(a) It is not a defense to the crime of stalking under subsection (1)(c)(i) of this section that the stalker was not given actual notice that the person did not want the stalker to contact or follow the person; and

(b) It is not a defense to the crime of stalking under subsection (1)(c)(ii) of this section that the stalker did not intend to frighten, intimidate, or harass the person.

(3) It shall be a defense to the crime of stalking that the defendant is a licensed private investigator acting within the capacity of his or her license as provided by chapter 18.165 RCW.

(4) Attempts to contact or follow the person after being given actual notice that the person does not want to be contacted or followed constitutes prima facie evidence that the stalker intends to intimidate or harass the person. "Contact" includes, in addition to any other form of contact or communication, the sending of an electronic communication to the person.

(5) A person who stalks another person is guilty of a gross misdemeanor except that the person is guilty of a class C felony if any of the following applies: (a) The stalker has previously been convicted in this state or any other state of any crime of harassment, as defined in RCW 9A.46.060, of the same victim or members of the victim's family or household or any person

specifically named in a protective order; (b) the stalking violates any protective order protecting the person being stalked; (c) the stalker has previously been convicted of a gross misdemeanor or felony stalking offense under this section for stalking another person; (d) the stalker was armed with a deadly weapon, as defined in *RCW 9.94A.602, while stalking the person; (e) the stalker's victim is or was a law enforcement officer, judge, juror, attorney, victim advocate, legislator, or community corrections officer, and the stalker stalked the victim to retaliate against the victim for an act the victim performed during the course of official duties or to influence the victim's performance of official duties; or (f) the stalker's victim is a current, former, or prospective witness in an adjudicative proceeding, and the stalker stalked the victim to retaliate against the victim as a result of the victim's testimony or potential testimony.

(6) As used in this section:

(a) "Follows" means deliberately maintaining visual or physical proximity to a specific person over a period of time. A finding that the alleged stalker repeatedly and deliberately appears at the person's home, school, place of employment, business, or any other location to maintain visual or physical proximity to the person is sufficient to find that the alleged stalker follows the person. It is not necessary to establish that the alleged stalker follows the person while in transit from one location to another.

(b) "Harasses" means unlawful harassment as defined in RCW 10.14.020.

(c) "Protective order" means any temporary or permanent court order prohibiting or limiting violence against, harassment of, contact or communication with, or physical proximity to another person.

(d) "Repeatedly" means on two or more separate occasions

- Community corrections officer and the stalker’s intention is to retaliate against the victim for an act performed during the course of official duties or in order to influence the victims performance of official duties
- The stalkers victim is a current, former, or prospective witness in an adjudicative proceeding and the stalker stalked the victim to retaliate against the victim as a result of the

	victim's testimony or potential testimony
STATUTE OF LIMITATIONS	The amount of time in which a person can be prosecuted for a criminal offense.
SUBPOENA	A judicial writ requiring a person to appear as a witness at a specified time and place, under penalty for defraud.
SUMMONS	A written order signed by a judge directing the person named to appear at a given time in the court named with reference to a stated matter. Proceedings by summons are the usual method for making persons amenable for minor offenses.
SUSPECT	That person or group of persons believed to be involved in the commission of a crime.
THEFT	**Theft defined:** To wrongfully obtain or exert unauthorized control over the property or services of another *with intent to deprive him/her of such property or services*. By color or aid of deception to obtain control over the property or services of another, with intent to deprive him/her of such property or services; To appropriate lost or misdelivered property or services of another with intent to deprive him/her of such property or services; Taking a Motor Vehicle without Permission is a Class C Felony
THREAT	A declaration of an intention to inflict injury or pain.
TOXIC	Pertaining to poison; poisonous.
TRANSIENT	Not permanent; casual; temporary. Also one who proceeds from place to place.
TRESPASS	The act of entering or being upon land of another without right. A trespassed person who refuses to leave on request may, by his conduct tend to provoke a break of peace, and thereby become liable to arrest and prosecution.
VAGRANT	A person, who, not having visible means to maintain himself, lives without employment.
VANDALISM	Willful destruction, without any reason.